



















RHYMES OF  
CHILDHOOD

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY



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TO THE LITTLE NEPHEW  
HENRY EDMUND EITEL



## PREFATORY NOTE

IN presenting herein the child dialect upon an equal footing with the proper or more serious English, the conscientious author feels it neither his desire nor province to offer excuse.

Wholly simple and artless, Nature's children oftentimes seem the more engaging for their very defects of speech and general deportment. We need worry very little for their futures since the All-Kind Mother has them in her keep.

It is just and good to give the elegantly trained and educated child a welcome hearing. It is no less just and pleasant to admit his homely but wholesome-hearted little brother to our interest and love.

J. W. R.



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RHYMES OF CHILDHOOD

*THE RIDER OF THE KNEE*

*Knightly Rider of the Knee  
Of Proud prancing Undclery!  
Gaily mount, and wave the sign  
Of that mastery of thine.*

*Pat thy steed and turn him free,  
Knightly Rider of the Knee!  
Sit thy charger as a throne—  
Lash him with thy laugh alone:*

*Sting him only with the spur  
Of such wit as may occur,  
Knightly Rider of the Knee,  
In thy shriek of ecstasy.*

*Would, as now, we might endure,  
Twain as one—thou miniature  
Ruler, at the rein of me—  
Knightly Rider of the Knee!*

## TOMMY SMITH

DIMPLE-CHEEKED and rosy-lipped,  
With his cap-rim backward tipped,  
Still in fancy I can see  
Little Tommy smile on me—  
                    Little Tommy Smith.

Little unsung Tommy Smith—  
Scarce a name to rhyme it with;  
Yet most tenderly to me  
Something sings unceasingly—  
                    Little Tommy Smith.

On the verge of some far land  
Still forever does he stand,  
With his cap-rim rakishly  
Tilted; so he smiles on me—  
                    Little Tommy Smith.

TOMMY SMITH

Elder-blooms contrast the grace  
Of the rover's radiant face—  
Whistling back, in mimicry,  
“Old—Bob—White!” all liquidly—  
Little Tommy Smith.

O my jaunty statuette  
Of first love, I see you yet,  
Though you smile so mistily,  
It is but through tears I see,  
Little Tommy Smith.

But, with crown tipped back behind,  
And the glad hand of the wind  
Smoothing back your hair, I see  
Heaven's best angel smile on me,—  
Little Tommy Smith.

## THE LITTLE-RED-APPLE TREE

THE Little-red-apple Tree!—

O the Little-red-apple Tree!

When I was the little-est bit of a boy

And you were a boy with me!

The bluebird's flight from the topmost boughs,

And the boys up there—so high

That we rocked over the roof of the house

And whooped as the winds went by!

Hey! The Little-red-apple Tree!

With the garden-beds below,

And the old grape-arbor so welcomingly

Hiding the rake and hoe!

Hiding, too, as the sun dripped through

In spatters of wasted gold,

Frank and Amy away from you

And me in the days of old!

THE LITTLE-RED-APPLE TREE

The Little-red-apple Tree!—

In the edge of the garden-spot,  
Where the apples fell so lavishly  
Into the neighbor's lot;—  
So do I think of you alway,  
Brother of mine, as the tree,—  
Giving the ripest wealth of your love  
To the world as well as me.

Ho! The Little-red-apple Tree!

Sweet as its juiciest fruit  
Spanged on the palate spicily,  
And rolled o'er the tongue to boot,  
Is the memory still and the joy  
Of the Little-red-apple Tree,  
When I was the little-est bit of a boy  
And you were a boy with me!



SOME SCATTERING REMARKS  
OF BUB'S

WUNST I took our pepper-box lid  
An' cut little pie-dough biscuits, I did,  
An' cooked 'em on our stove one day  
When our hired girl she said I may.

*Honey's* the *goodest* thing—Oo-oo!  
An' blackburry-pies is goodest, too!  
But wite hot biscuits, ist soakin' wet  
Wiv tree-mullasus, is goodest yet!

Miss Maimie she's my Ma's friend,—an'  
She's purtiest girl in all the lan'!—  
An' sweetest smile an' voice an' face—  
An' eyes ist looks like p'serves tas'e'!

I *ruther* go to the Circus-show ;  
But, 'cause my *parunts* told me so,  
I ruther go to the Sund'y School,  
'Cause there I learn the goldun rule.

Say, Pa,—what *is* the goldun rule  
'At's allus at the Sund'y School?

## THE PIXY PEOPLE

It was just a very  
Merry fairy dream!—  
All the woods were airy  
With the gloom and gleam;  
Crickets in the clover  
Clattered clear and strong,  
And the bees droned over  
Their old honey-song!

In the mossy passes,  
Saucy grasshoppers  
Leaped about the grasses  
And the thistle-burs;  
And the whispered chuckle  
Of the katydid  
Shook the honeysuckle-  
Blossoms where he hid.

THE PIXY PEOPLE

Through the breezy mazes  
Of the lazy June,  
Drowsy with the hazes  
Of the dreamy noon,  
Little Pixy people  
Winged above the walk,  
Pouring from the steeple  
Of a mullein-stalk.

One—a gallant fellow—  
Evidently King,—  
Wore a plume of yellow  
In a jewelled ring  
On a pansy bonnet,  
Gold and white and blue,  
With the dew still on it,  
And the fragrance, too.

One—a dainty lady,—  
Evidently Queen—  
Wore a gown of shady  
Moonshine and green,

THE PIXY PEOPLE

With a lace of gleaming  
Starlight that sent  
All the dewdrops dreaming  
Everywhere she went.

One wore a waistcoat  
Of rose-leaves, out and in;  
And one wore a faced-coat  
Of tiger-lily-skin;  
And one wore a neat coat  
Of palest galingale;  
And one a tiny street-coat,  
And one a swallow-tail.

And Ho! sang the King of them,  
And Hey! sang the Queen;  
And round and round the ring of them  
Went dancing o'er the green;  
And Hey! sang the Queen of them,  
And Ho! sang the King—  
And all that I had seen of them  
—Wasn't anything!

THE PIXY PEOPLE

It was just a very  
Merry fairy dream!—  
All the woods were airy  
With the gloom and gleam;  
Crickets in the clover  
Clattered clear and strong,  
And the bees droned over  
Their old honey-song!

## UNCLE SIDNEY

SOMETIMES, when I bin bad,  
An' Pa "currecks" me nen,  
An' Uncle Sidney he comes here,  
I'm allus good again ;

'Cause Uncle Sidney says,  
An' takes me up an' smiles,—  
*The goodest mens they is ain't good*  
*As baddest little child's !*

## PANSIES

PANSIES! Pansies! How I love you, pansies!

Jaunty-faced, laughing-lipped and dewy-eyed  
with glee;

Would my song but blossom in little five-leaf  
stanzas

As delicate in fancies

As your beauty is to me!

But my eyes shall smile on you, and my hands in-  
fold you,

Pet, caress, and lift you to the lips that love  
you so,

That, shut ever in the years that may mildew or  
mould you,

My fancy shall behold you

Fair as in the long ago.

## WAITIN' FER THE CAT TO DIE

LAWZY! don't I rickollect  
That-air old swing in the lane!  
Right and proper, I expect,  
Old times *can't* come back again;  
But I want to state, ef they  
*Could* come back, and I could say  
What *my* pick'ud be, i jing!  
I'd say, Gimme the old swing  
'Nunder the old locus'-trees  
On the old place, ef you please!—  
Danglin' there with half-shet eye,  
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

I'd say, Gimme the old gang  
O' barefooted, hungry, lean,  
Omry boys you want to hang  
When you're growed up twic't as mean!



WAITIN' FER THE CAT TO DIE

The old gyarden-patch, the old  
Truants, and the stuff we stol'd!  
The old stompin'-groun', where we  
Wore the grass off, wild and free  
As the swoop o' the old swing,  
Where we ust to climb and cling,  
And twist roun', and fight, and lie—  
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

'Pears like I 'most allus could  
Swing the highest of the crowd—  
Jes sail up there tel I stood  
Downside-up, and screech out loud,—  
Ketch my breath, and jes drap back  
Fer to let the old swing slack,  
Yit my towhead dippin' still  
In the green boughs, and the chill  
Up my backbone taperin' down,  
With my shadder on the groun'  
Slow and slower trailin' by—  
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

WAITIN' FER THE CAT TO DIE

Now my daughter's little Jane's  
Got a kind o' baby-swing  
On the porch, so's when it rains  
She kin play there—little thing!  
And I'd limped out t'other day  
With my old cheer thisaway,  
Swingin' *her* and rockin' too,  
Thinkin' how *I* ust to do  
At *her* age, when suddently,  
“Hey, Gran'pap!” she says to me,  
“Why you rock so slow?” . . . Says I,  
“Waitin' fer the cat to die!”

## THE WAY THE BABY CAME

O THIS is the way the baby came:

Out of the night as comes the dawn;

Out of the embers as the flame;

Out of the bud the blossom on

The apple-bough that blooms the same

As in glad summers dead and gone—

With a grace and beauty none could name—

O this is the way the baby came!

## UNINTERPRETED

SUPINELY we lie in the grove's shady greenery,  
Gazing, all dreamy-eyed, up through the trees,—  
And as to the sight is the heavenly scenery,  
So to the hearing the sigh of the breeze.

We catch but vague rifts of the blue through the  
wavering  
Boughs of the maples; and, like undefined,  
The whispers and lisps of the leaves, faint and  
quavering,  
Meaningless falter and fall on the mind.

The vine, with its beauty of blossom, goes rioting  
Up by the casement, as sweet to the eye  
As the trill of the robin is restful and quieting  
Heard in a drowse with the dawn in the sky.

And yet we yearn on to learn more of the mystery—  
We see and we hear, but forever remain  
Mute, blind and deaf to the ultimate history  
Born of a rose or a patter of rain.

## MOTHER GOOSE

DEAR Mother Goose! most motherly and dear  
Of all good mothers who have laps wherein  
We children nestle safest from all sin,—  
I cuddle to thy bosom, with no fear  
To there confess that though thy cap be queer,  
And thy curls gimlety, and thy cheeks thin,  
And though the winkered mole upon thy chin  
Tickles thy very nose-tip,—still to hear  
The jolly jingles of mine infancy  
Crooned by thee, makes mine eager arms, as now,  
To twine about thy neck, full tenderly  
Drawing the dear old face down, that thy brow  
May dip into my purest kiss, and be  
Crowned ever with the baby-love of me.

## THE HAPPY LITTLE CRIPPLE

I'M thist a little crippled boy, an' never goin' to  
grow  
An' git a great big man at all!—'cause Aunty told  
me so.  
When I was thist a baby onc't I falled out of the  
bed  
An' got "The Curv'ture of the Spine"—'at's  
what the Doctor said.  
I never had no Mother nen—fer my Pa runned  
away  
An' dassn't come back here no more—'cause he  
was drunk one day  
An' stobbed a man in thish-ere town, an' couldn't  
pay his fine!  
An' nen my Ma she died—an' I got "Curv'ture  
of the Spine"!

THE HAPPY LITTLE CRIPPLE

I'm nine years old! An' you can't guess how  
much I weigh, I bet!—

Last birthday I weighed thirty-three!—An' I weigh  
thirty yet!

I'm awful little fer my size—I'm purt' nigh lit-  
tler nan

Some babies is!—an' neighbors all calls me “The  
Little Man”!

An' Doc one time he laughed an' said: “I 'spect,  
first think you know,

You'll have a little spike-tail coat an' travel with  
a show!”

An' nen I laughed—till I looked round an' Aunty  
was a-cryin'—

Sometimes she acts like that, 'cause I got “Curv'-  
ture of the Spine”!

I set—while Aunty's washin'—on my little long-  
leg stool,

An' watch the little boys an' girls a-skipin' by  
to school;

An' I peck on the winder, an' holler out an' say:  
“Who wants to fight The Little Man 'at dares you  
all to-day?”

THE HAPPY LITTLE CRIPPLE

An' nen the boys climbs on the fence, an' little  
girls peeks through,  
An' they all says: "'Cause you're so big, you  
think we're 'feard o' you!"  
An' nen they yell, an' shake their fist at me, like  
I shake mine—  
They're thist in fun, you know, 'cause I got  
"Curv'ture of the Spine"!

At evening, when the ironin's done, an' Aunty's  
fixed the fire,  
An' filled an' lit the lamp, an' trimmed the wick  
an' turned it higher,  
An' fetched the wood all in fer night, an' locked  
the kitchen door,  
An' stuffed the old crack where the wind blows in  
up through the floor—  
She sets the kittle on the coals, an' biles an' makes  
the tea,  
An' fries the liver an' the mush, an' cooks a egg  
fer me;  
An' sometimes—when I cough so hard—her elder-  
berry wine  
Don't go so bad fer little boys with "Curv'ture of  
the Spine"!



THE HAPPY LITTLE CRIPPLE

An' nen when she putts me to bed—an' 'fore she  
does she's got

My blanket-nighty, 'at she maked, all good an'  
warm an' hot,

Hunged on the rocker by the fire,—she sings me  
hymns, an' tells

Me 'bout The Good Man—yes, an' Elves, an'  
Old Enchanter spells;

An' tells me more—an' more—an' more!—tel I'm  
*asleep*, purt' nigh—

Only I thist set up ag'in an' kiss her when she cry,  
A-tellin' on 'bout *some* boy's Angel-mother—an'  
it's *mine!* . . .

My *Ma's* a *Angel*—but *I'm* got “The Curv'ture  
of the Spine”!

But Aunty's all so childish-like on my account,  
you see,

I'm 'most afeared she'll be took down—an' 'at's  
what bothers *me!*—

'Cause ef my good old Aunty ever would git sick  
an' die,

I don't know what she'd do in Heaven—till I  
 come, by an' by:—  
 Fer she's so ust to all my ways, an' ever'thing,  
 you know,  
 An' no one there like me, to nurse an' worry over  
 so!—  
 'Cause all the little childerns there's so straight an'  
 strong an' fine,  
 They's nary angel 'bout the place 'with "Curv'-  
 ture of the Spine"!

NOTE.—The word "thist," as used in foregoing lines,  
 is an occasional childish pronunciation evolved from the  
 word "just"—a word which in child vernacular has mani-  
 fold supplanters,—such as "jus," "jes," "des," "jis,"  
 "dis," "jist," "dist," "ist," and even "gist," with hard *g*.  
 In "thist," as above, sound "th" as in the word "the."

## THE DAYS GONE BY

O THE days gone by! O the days gone by!  
The apples in the orchard, and the pathway through  
the rye;  
The chirrup of the robin, and the whistle of the  
quail  
As he piped across the meadows sweet as any  
nightingale;  
When the bloom was on the clover, and the blue  
was in the sky,  
And my happy heart brimmed over, in the days  
gone by.

In the days gone by, when my naked feet were  
tripped  
By the honeysuckle tangles where the water-lilies  
dipped,

THE DAYS GONE BY

And the ripples of the river lipped the moss along  
the brink  
Where the placid-eyed and lazy-footed cattle came  
to drink,  
And the tilting snipe stood fearless of the truant's  
wayward cry  
And the splashing of the swimmer, in the days  
gone by.

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!  
The music of the laughing lip, the lustre of the eye;  
The childish faith in fairies, and Aladdin's magic  
ring—  
The simple, soul-reposing, glad belief in every-  
thing,—  
When life was like a story holding neither sob nor  
sigh,  
In the golden olden glory of the days gone by.

## CHRISTMAS AFTERTHOUGHT

AFTER a thoughtful, almost painful pause,  
Bub sighed, "I'm sorry fer old *Santy Claus*:—  
They *wuz* no *Santy Claus*, ner *couldn't* be,  
When *he* wuz ist a little boy like me!"

## THE ROBINS' OTHER NAME

In the Orchard-Days, when you  
Children look like blossoms, too;  
Bessie, with her jaunty ways  
And trim poise of head and face,  
Must have looked superior  
Even to the blossoms,—for  
Little Winnie once averred  
Bessie looked just like the bird  
Tilted on the topmost spray  
Of the apple-boughs in May,  
With the red breast, and the strong,  
Clear, sweet warble of his song.—  
“I don’t know their *name*,” Win said—  
“I ist *maked* a name instead.”—  
So forever afterwards  
*We* called robins “Bessie-birds.”

TO HATTIE—ON HER BIRTHDAY

*Written in "A Child's Garden of Verses"*

WHEN your "Uncle Jim" was younger,  
In the days of childish hunger  
For the honey of such verses  
As this little book rehearses  
    In such sweet simplicity,—  
Just the simple gift that this is  
Would have brimmed his heart with blisses  
Sweet as Hattie's sweetest kisses,  
    On her anniversary.

## THE CHRISTMAS LONG AGO

COME, sing a hale Heigh-ho  
For the Christmas long ago!—  
When the old log-cabin homed us  
    From the night of blinding snow,  
When the rarest joy held reign,  
And the chimney roared amain,  
With the firelight like a beacon  
    Through the frosty window-pane.

Ah! the revel and the din  
From without and from within,  
The blend of distant sleigh-bells  
    With the plinking violin;  
The muffled shrieks and cries—  
    Then the glowing cheeks and eyes—  
The driving storm of greetings,  
    Gusts of kisses and surprise.



THE CHRISTMAS LONG AGO

Sing—sweetest of all glees—  
Of the taffy-makers, please,—  
And, round the saucers in the snow,  
The children thick as bees;  
And sing each chubby cheek,  
Chin and laughing lip astreak  
With still a sweeter sweetness than  
The tongue of Song can speak.

Sing in again the mirth  
Of the circle round the hearth,  
With the rustic Sindbad telling us  
The strangest tales on earth!  
And the Minstrel Bard we knew,  
With his “Love-i-er so True,”  
Likewise his “Young House-K-yarpen-ter,”  
And “Lovèd Henry,” too!

And, forgetting ne'er a thing,  
Lift a gladder voice and sing  
Of the dancers in the kitchen—  
Clean from start to “pigeon-wing”!  
Sing the glory and the glee  
And the joy and jubilee,—

THE CHRISTMAS LONG AGO

The twirling form—the quickened breath—  
The sigh of ecstasy.—

The eyes that smile alone  
Back into our happy own—  
The leaping pulse—the laughing blood—  
The trembling undertone!—  
Ho! pair us off once more,  
With our feet upon the floor  
And our heads and hearts in heaven,  
As they were in days of yore!

## MABEL

SWEET little face, so full of slumber now—  
Sweet lips uplifted now with any kiss—  
Sweet dimpled cheek and chin, and snowy brow,—  
What quietude is this?

O speak! Have you forgotten, yesterday,  
How gladly you came running to the gate  
To meet us in the old familiar way,  
So joyous—so elate—

So filled with wildest glee, yet so serene  
With innocence of song and childish chat,  
With all the dear caresses in between—  
Have you forgotten that?

Have you forgotten, knowing gentler charms,  
The boisterous love of one you ran to greet  
When you last met, who caught you in his arms  
And kissed you, in the street?

MABEL

Not very many days have passed since then,  
And yet between that kiss and him there lies  
No pathway of return—unless again,  
In streets of Paradise,

Your eager feet come twinkling down the gold  
Of some bright thoroughfare ethereal,  
To meet and greet him there just as of old.—  
Till then, farewell—farewell.

## LITTLE GIRLY-GIRL

LITTLE Girly-Girl, of you  
Still forever I am dreaming.-  
Laughing eyes of limpid blue—  
Tresses glimmering and gleaming  
Like glad waters running over  
Shelving shallows, rimmed with clover,  
Trembling where the eddies whirl,  
Gurgling, "Little Girly-Girl!"

For your name it came to me  
Down the brink of brooks that brought it  
Out of Paradise—and we—  
Love and I—we, leaning, caught it  
From the ripples romping nigh us,  
And the bubbles bumping by us  
Over shoals of pebbled pearl,  
Lilting, "Little Girly-Girl!"

LITTLE GIRLY-GIRL

That was long and long ago,  
But in memory the tender  
Winds of summer weather blow,  
And the roses burst in splendor;  
And the meadow's grassy billows  
Break in blossoms round the willows  
Where the currents curve and curl,  
Calling, "Little Girly-Girl!"

## JACK-IN-THE-BOX

[*Grandfather, musing*]

IN childish days! O memory,  
You bring such curious things to me!—  
Laughs to the lip—tears to the eye,  
In looking on the gifts that lie  
Like broken playthings scattered o'er  
Imagination's nursery floor!  
Did these old hands once click the key  
That let "Jack's" box-lid upward fly,  
And that blear-eyed, fur-whiskered elf  
Leap, as though frightened at himself,  
And quiveringly lean and stare  
At me, his jailer, laughing there?

A child then! Now—I only know  
They call me very old; and so  
They will not let me have my way,—  
But uselessly I sit all day

JACK-IN-THE-BOX

Here by the chimney-jamb, and poke  
The lazy fire, and smoke and smoke,  
And watch the wreaths swoop up the flue,  
And chuckle—ay, I often do—  
Seeing again, all vividly,  
Jack-in-the-box leap, as in glee  
To see how much he looks like me!

. . . They talk. I can't hear what they say—  
But I am glad, clean through and through  
Sometimes, in fancying that they  
Are saying, "Sweet, that fancy strays  
In age back to our childish days!"



## TIME OF CLEARER TWITTERINGS

### I

TIME of crisp and tawny leaves,  
And of tarnished harvest sheaves,  
And of dusty grasses—weeds—  
Thistles, with their tufted seeds  
Voyaging the Autumn breeze  
Like as fairy argosies:  
Time of quicker flash of wings,  
And of clearer twitterings  
In the grove or deeper shade  
Of the tangled everglade,—  
Where the spotted water-snake  
Coils him in the sunniest brake;  
And the bittern, as in fright,  
Darts, in sudden, slanting flight,  
Southward, while the startled crane  
Films his eyes in dreams again.

II

Down along the dwindled creek  
We go loitering. We speak  
Only with old questionings  
Of the dear remembered things  
Of the days of long ago,  
When the stream seemed thus and so  
In our boyish eyes:—The bank  
Greener then, through rank on rank  
Of the mottled sycamores,  
Touching tops across the shores:  
Here, the hazel thicket stood—  
There, the almost pathless wood  
Where the shellbark hickory-tree  
Rained its wealth on you and me.  
Autumn! as you loved us then,  
Take us to your heart again!

III

Season halest of the year!  
How the zestful atmosphere  
Nettles blood and brain and smites  
Into life the old delights

We have wasted in our youth,  
And our graver years, forsooth!  
How again the boyish heart  
Leaps to see the chipmunk start  
From the brush and sleek the sun's  
Very beauty, as he runs!  
How again a subtle hint  
Of crushed pennyroyal or mint  
Sends us on our knees, as when  
We were truant boys of ten—  
Brown marauders of the wood,  
Merrier than Robin Hood!

IV

Ah! will any minstrel say,  
In his sweetest roundelay,  
What is sweeter, after all,  
Than black haws, in early Fall?—  
Fruit so sweet the frost first sat,  
Dainty-toothed, and nibbled at!  
And will any poet sing  
Of a lusher, richer thing

TIME OF CLEARER TWITTERINGS

Than a ripe May-apple, rolled  
Like a pulpy lump of gold  
Under thumb and finger-tips,  
And poured molten through the lips?  
Go, ye bards of classic themes,  
Pipe your songs by classic streams!  
I would twang the redbird's wings  
In the thicket while he sings!

## ON THE SUNNY SIDE

Hi and whoop-hooray, boys!  
Sing a song of cheer!  
Here's a holiday, boys,  
Lasting half a year!  
Round the world, and half is  
Shadow we have tried;  
Now we're where the laugh is,—  
On the sunny side!

Pigeons coo and mutter,  
Strutting high aloof  
Where the sunbeams flutter  
Through the stable roof.  
Hear the chickens cheep, boys,  
And the hen with pride  
Clucking them to sleep, boys,  
On the sunny side!

Hear the clacking guinea;  
Hear the cattle moo;  
Hear the horses whinny,  
Looking out at you!

ON THE SUNNY SIDE

On the hitching-block, boys,  
Grandly satisfied,  
See the old peacock, boys,  
On the sunny side!

Robins in the peach-tree ;  
Bluebirds in the pear ;  
Blossoms over each tree  
In the orchard there !  
All the world's in joy, boys,  
Glad and glorified  
As a romping boy, boys,  
On the sunny side!

Where's a heart as mellow—  
Where's a soul as free—  
Where is any fellow  
We would rather be?  
Just ourselves or none, boys,  
World around and wide,  
Laughing in the sun, boys,  
On the sunny side!

## THE ALL-GOLDEN

### I

THROUGH every happy line I sing  
I feel the tonic of the Spring.  
The day is like an old-time face  
That gleams across some grassy place—  
An old-time face—an old-time chum  
Who rises from the grave to come  
And lure me back along the ways  
Of time's all-golden yesterdays.  
Sweet day! to thus remind me of  
The truant boy I used to love—  
To set, once more, his finger-tips  
Against the blossom of his lips,  
And pipe for me the signal known  
By none but him and me alone!

## THE ALL-GOLDEN

### II

I see, across the school-room floor,  
The shadow of the open door,  
And dancing dust and sunshine blent  
Slanting the way the morning went,  
And beckoning my thoughts afar  
Where reeds and running waters are;  
Where amber-colored bayous glass  
The half-drown'd weeds and wisps of grass.  
Where sprawling frogs, in loveless key,  
Sing on and on incessantly.  
Against the green wood's dim expanse  
The cattail tilts its tufted lance,  
While on its tip—one might declare  
The white "snake-feeder" blossomed there!

### III

I catch my breath as children do  
In woodland swings when life is new,  
And all the blood is warm as wine  
And tingles with a tang divine.  
My soul soars up the atmosphere  
And sings aloud where God can hear,



THE ALL-GOLDEN

And all my being leans intent  
To mark His smiling wonderment.  
O gracious dream, and gracious time,  
And gracious theme, and gracious rhyme—  
When buds of Spring begin to blow  
In blossoms that we used to know  
And lure us back along the ways  
Of time's all-golden yesterdays!

LONGFELLOW'S LOVE FOR THE  
CHILDREN

AWAKE, he loved their voices,  
And wove them into his rhyme;  
And the music of their laughter  
Was with him all the time.

Though he knew the tongues of nations,  
And their meanings all were dear,  
The prattle and lisp of a little child  
Was the sweetest for him to hear.

## WINTER FANCIES

### I

WINTER without

And warmth within ;

The winds may shout

And the storm begin ;

The snows may pack

At the window-pane,

And the skies grow black,

And the sun remain

Hidden away

The livelong day—

But here—in here is the warmth of May!

### II

Swoop your spitefullest

Up the flue,

Wild Winds—do!

What in the world do I care for you?

WINTER FANCIES

O delightfulest  
Weather of all,  
Howl and squall,  
And shake the trees till the last leaves fall!

III

The joy one feels,  
In an easy-chair,  
Cocking his heels  
In the dancing air  
That wreaths the rim of a roaring stove  
Whose heat loves better than hearts can love,  
Will not permit  
The coldest day  
To drive away  
The fire in his blood, and the bliss of it!

IV

Then blow, Winds, blow!  
And rave and shriek,  
And snarl and snow,  
Till your breath grows weak—

WINTER FANCIES

While here in my room  
I'm as snugly shut  
As a glad little worm  
In the heart of a nut!

## THE PRAYER PERFECT

DEAR Lord! kind Lord!  
    Gracious Lord! I pray  
Thou wilt look on all I love,  
    Tenderly to-day!  
Weed their hearts of weariness;  
    Scatter every care  
Down a wake of angel-wings  
    Winnowing the air.

Bring unto the sorrowing  
    All release from pain;  
Let the lips of laughter  
    Overflow again;  
And with all the needy  
    O divide, I pray,  
This vast treasure of content  
    That is mine to-day!

## A MOTHER-SONG

MOTHER, O mother! forever I cry for you,  
Sing the old song I may never forget;  
Even in slumber I murmur and sigh for you.—

Mother, O Mother,  
Sing low, “Little brother,  
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!”

Mother, O mother! the years are so lonely,  
Filled but with weariness, doubt and regret!  
Can't you come back to me—for to-night only,

Mother, my mother,  
And sing, “Little brother,  
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!”

Mother, O mother! of old I had never  
One wish denied me, nor trouble to fret;  
Now—must I cry out all vainly forever,—

Mother, sweet mother,  
O sing, “Little brother,  
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!”

A MOTHER-SONG

Mother, O mother! must longing and sorrow  
    Leave me in darkness, with eyes ever wet,  
And never the hope of a meeting to-morrow?  
    Answer me, mother,  
        And sing, "Little brother,  
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"



## IN THE NIGHT

WHEN it's night, and no light, too,  
Wakin' by yourse'f,  
With the old clock mockin' you  
On the mantel-she'f;  
In the dark—so still and black,  
You're afeard you'll hear  
Somepin' awful pop and crack,—  
“Go to sleep, my dear!”

That's what *Mother* says.—And *then's*  
When we ain't *afeard!*  
Wunder, when we be big mens,  
Then 'ul we be skeerd?—  
Some night *Mother's* goned away,  
And ist *us* is here,  
Will The Good Man wake and say,  
“Go to sleep, my dear”?

## THE FUNNY LITTLE FELLOW

'Twas a Funny Little Fellow  
Of the very purest type,  
For he had a heart as mellow  
As an apple overripe ;  
And the brightest little twinkle  
When a funny thing occurred,  
And the lightest little tinkle  
Of a laugh you ever heard!

His smile was like the glitter  
Of the sun in tropic lands,  
And his talk a sweeter twitter,  
Than the swallow understands ;  
Hear him sing—and tell a story—  
Snap a joke—ignite a pun,—  
'Twas a capture—rapture—glory,  
And explosion—all in one!

THE FUNNY LITTLE FELLOW

Though he hadn't any money—  
    That condiment which tends  
To make a fellow "honey"  
    For the palate of his friends;—  
Sweet simples he compounded—  
    Sovereign antidotes for sin  
Or taint,—a faith unbounded  
    That his friends were genuine.

He wasn't honored, maybe—  
    For his songs of praise were slim,—  
Yet I never knew a baby  
    That wouldn't crow for him;  
I never knew a mother  
    But urged a kindly claim  
Upon him as a brother,  
    At the mention of his name.

The sick have ceased their sighing,  
    And have even found the grace  
Of a smile when they were dying  
    As they looked upon his face;

THE FUNNY LITTLE FELLOW

And I've seen his eyes of laughter  
Melt in tears that only ran  
As though, swift-dancing after,  
Came the Funny Little Man.

He laughed away the sorrow  
And he laughed away the gloom  
We are all so prone to borrow  
From the darkness of the tomb ;  
And he laughed across the ocean  
Of a happy life, and passed,  
With a laugh of glad emotion,  
Into Paradise at last.

And I think the Angels knew him,  
And had gathered to await  
His coming, and run to him  
Through the widely opened Gate,  
With their faces gleaming sunny  
For his laughter-loving sake,  
And thinking, "What a funny  
Little Angel he will make!"

## UNCLE SIDNEY'S VIEWS

I HOLD that the true age of wisdom is when  
We are boys and girls, and not women and men,—  
When as credulous children we *know* things because  
We *believe* them—however averse to the laws.  
It is *faith*, then, not science and reason, I say,  
That is genuine wisdom.—And would that to-day  
We, as then, were as wise and ineffably blest  
As to live, love and die, and trust God for the rest!

So I simply deny the old notion, you know,  
That the wiser we get as the older we grow!—  
For *in youth* all we know we are *certain* of.—*Now*  
The greater our knowledge, the more we allow  
For sceptical margin.—And hence I regret  
That the world isn't flat, and the sun doesn't set,  
And we may not go creeping up home, when we  
die,  
Through the moon, like a round yellow hole in the  
sky.

WHEN EARLY MARCH SEEMS MIDDLE  
MAY

WHEN country roads begin to thaw  
In mottled spots of damp and dust,  
And fences by the margin draw  
Along the frosty crust  
Their graphic silhouettes, I say,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When morning-time is bright with sun  
And keen with wind, and both confuse  
The dancing, glancing eyes of one  
With tears that ooze and ooze—  
And nose-tips weep as well as they,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When suddenly some shadow-bird  
Goes wavering beneath the gaze,  
And through the hedge the moan is heard  
Of kine that fain would graze  
In grasses new, I smile and say,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

WHEN EARLY MARCH SEEMS MIDDLE MAY

When knotted horse-tails are untied,  
And teamsters whistle here and there,  
And clumsy mitts are laid aside  
And choppers' hands are bare,  
And chips are thick where children play,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When through the twigs the farmer tramps,  
And troughs are chunked beneath the trees,  
And fragrant hints of sugar-camps  
Astray in every breeze,—  
When early March seems middle May,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When coughs are changed to laughs, and when  
Our frowns melt into smiles of glee,  
And all our blood thaws out again  
In streams of ecstasy,  
And poets wreak their roundelay,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

## THE NINE LITTLE GOBLINS

THEY all climbed up on a high board-fence—  
Nine little goblins, with green-glass eyes—  
Nine little goblins that had no sense,  
And couldn't tell coppers from cold mince-pies ;  
And they all climbed up on the fence, and sat—  
And I asked them what they were staring at.

And the first one said, as he scratched his head  
With a queer little arm that reached out of his ear  
And rasped its claws in his hair so red—  
“This is what thjs little arm is fer!”  
And he scratched and stared, and the next one  
said,  
“How on earth do *you* scratch your head?”

And he laughed like the screech of a rusty hinge—  
Laughed and laughed till his face grew black ;  
And when he choked, with a final twinge  
Of his stiffling laughter, he thumped his back



## THE NINE LITTLE GOBLINS

With a fist that grew on the end of his tail  
Till the breath came back to his lips so pale.

And the third little goblin leered round at me—  
And there were no lids on his eyes at all,—  
And he clucked one eye, and he says, says he,  
“What is the style of your socks this fall?”  
And he clapped his heels—and I sighed to see  
That he had hands where his feet should be.

Then a bald-faced goblin, gray and grim,  
Bowed his head, and I saw him slip  
His eyebrows off, as I looked at him,  
And paste them over his upper lip;  
And then he moaned in remorseful pain—  
“Would—Ah, would I'd me brows again!”

And then the whole of the goblin band  
Rocked on the fence-top to and fro,  
And clung, in a long row, hand in hand,  
Singing the songs that they used to know—  
Singing the songs that their grandsires sung  
In the goo-goo days of the goblin-tongue.

THE NINE LITTLE GOBLINS

And ever they kept their green-glass eyes  
Fixed on me with a stony stare—  
Till my own grew glazed with a dread surmise,  
And my hat whooped up on my lifted hair,  
And I felt the heart in my breast snap to,  
As you've heard the lid of a snuff-box do.

And they sang: "You're asleep! There is no  
board-fence,  
And never a goblin with green-glass eyes!—  
'Tis only a vision the mind invents  
After a supper of cold mince-pies.—  
And you're doomed to dream this way," they  
said,—  
*"And you sha'n't wake up till you're clean  
plum dead!"*

## THE LITTLE COAT

HERE'S his ragged "roundabout." . . .  
Turn the pockets inside out:  
See; his penknife, lost to use,  
Rusted shut with apple-juice;  
Here, with marbles, top and string,  
Is his deadly "devil-sling,"  
With its rubber, limp at last  
As the sparrows of the past!  
Beeswax—buckles—leather straps—  
Bullets, and a box of caps,—  
Not a thing of all, I guess,  
But betrays some waywardness—  
E'en these tickets, blue and red,  
For the Bible-verses said—  
Such as this his mem'ry kept,—  
                                          "Jesus wept."

## THE LITTLE COAT

Here's a fishing-hook and -line,  
Tangled up with wire and twine,  
And dead angleworms, and some  
Slugs of lead and chewing-gum,  
Blent with scents that can but come  
From the oil of rhodium.  
Here—a soiled, yet dainty note,  
That some little sweetheart wrote,  
Dotting—"Vine grows round the stump,"  
And—"My sweetest sugar-lump!"  
Wrapped in this—a padlock key  
Where he's filed a touch-hole—see!  
And some powder in a quill  
Corked up with a liver pill;  
And a spongy little chunk  
Of "punk."

Here's the little coat—but O  
Where is he we've censured so?  
Don't you hear us calling, dear?  
Back! come back, and never fear.—  
You may wander where you will,  
Over orchard, field and hill;

THE LITTLE COAT

You may kill the birds, or do  
Anything that pleases you!  
Ah, this empty coat of his!  
Every tatter worth a kiss;  
Every stain as pure instead  
As the white stars overhead:  
And the pockets—homes were they  
Of the little hands that play  
Now no more—but, absent, thus  
                                Beckon us.

## LAWYER AND CHILD

How large was Alexander, father,  
That parties designate  
The historic gentleman as rather  
Inordinately great?

Why, son, to speak with conscientious  
Regard for history,  
Waiving all claims, of course, to heights  
pretentious,—  
About the size of me.

EXCEEDING ALL

LONG life's a lovely thing to know,  
With lovely health and wealth, forsooth,  
And lovely name and fame—But O  
The loveliness of Youth!

THE DREAM OF THE LITTLE  
PRINCESS

'Twas a curious dream, good sooth!—  
    The dream of The Little Princess;  
It seemed a dream, yet a truth,  
Long years ago in her youth.—  
    It *came* as a dream—no less  
    It was *not* a dream, she says.

(She is singing and saying things  
    Musical as the wile  
Of the eerie quaverings  
That drip from the grievèd strings  
    Of her lute.—We weep or smile  
    Even as she, meanwhile.)



In a day, long dead and gone,  
    When her castle-turrets threw  
Their long, sharp shadows on  
The sward like lances,—wan  
    And lone, she strayed into  
    Strange grounds where lilies grew.

There, late in the afternoon,  
    As she sate in the terrace shade,  
Rav'ling a half-spun tune  
From a lute like a wee new-moon,—  
    High off was a bugle played,  
    And a sound as of steeds that neighed.

And the lute fell from her hands,  
    As her eyes raised, half in doubt,  
To the arch of the azure lands  
Where lo! with the fluttering strands  
    Of a rainbow reined about  
    His wrist, rode a horseman out.

And The Little Princess was stirred  
    No less at his steeds than him;—

THE DREAM OF THE LITTLE PRINCESS

A jet-black span of them gird  
In advance, he bestrode the third ;  
    And the troop of them seemed to swim  
    The skies as the Seraphim.

Wingless they were, yet so  
    Upborne in their wondrous flight—  
As their master bade them go,  
They dwindled on high ; or lo !  
    They curved from their heavenmost height  
    And swooped to her level sight.

And the eyes of The Little Princess  
    Grow O so bright as the chants  
Of the horseman's courtliness,—  
Saluting her low—Ah, yes !  
    And lifting a voice that haunts  
    Her own song's weird romance.

For (she sings) at last he swept  
    As near to her as the tips  
Of the lilies, that whitely slept,  
As he leaned o'er one and wept  
    And touched it with his lips—  
    Sweeter than honey-drips !

THE DREAM OF THE LITTLE PRINCESS

And she keeps the lily yet—  
    As the horseman bade (she says)  
As he launched, with a wild curvet,  
His steeds toward the far sunset,  
    Till gulfed in its gorgeousness  
    And lost to The Little Princess:

*But O, my master sweet!*  
    *He is coming again! (she sings)*  
*My Prince of the Coursers fleet,*  
    *With his bugle's echoings,*  
    *And the breath of his voice for the wings*  
*Of the sandals of his feet!*

## THE LAND OF USED-TO-BE

AND where's the Land of Used-to-be, does little  
baby wonder? .

Oh, we will clap a magic saddle over "Poppie's"  
knee

And ride away around the world, and in and out  
and under

The whole of all the golden sunny Summer-  
time and see.

Leisurely and lazy-like we'll jostle on our journey,  
And let the pony bathe his hooves and cool them  
in the dew,

As he sidles down the shady way, and lags along  
the ferny

And green, grassy edges of the lane we travel  
through.

And then we'll canter on to catch the bubble of the  
thistle

As it bumps among the butterflies and glimmers  
down the sun,

THE LAND OF USED-TO-BE

To leave us laughing, all content to hear the robin  
whistle

Or guess what Katydid is saying little Katy's  
done.

And pausing here a minute, where we hear the  
squirrel chuckle

As he darts from out the underbrush and scam-  
pers up the tree,

We will gather buds and locust-blossoms, leaves  
and honeysuckle,

To wreath around our foreheads, riding into  
Used-to-be;—

For here's the very rim of it that we go swinging  
over—

Don't you hear the Fairy bugles, and the tinkle  
of the bells,

And see the baby-bumblebees that tumble in the  
clover

And dangle from the tilted pinks and tipsy pim-  
pernels?

THE LAND OF USED-TO-BE

And don't you see the merry faces of the daffo-  
dillies,  
And the jolly Johnny-jump-ups, and the butter-  
cups a-glee,  
And the low, lolling ripples ring around the water-  
lilies?—  
All greeting us with laughter, to the Land of  
Used-to-be!

And here among the blossoms of the blooming  
vines and grasses,  
With a haze forever hanging in the sky forever  
blue,  
And with a breeze from over seas to kiss us as it  
passes,  
We will romp around forever as the airy Elfin  
do!

For all the elves of earth and air are swarming  
here together—  
The prankish Puck, King Oberon, and Queen  
Titania too;  
And dear old Mother Goose herself, as sunny as  
the weather,  
Comes dancing down the dewy walks to wel-  
come me and you!

## WHEN OUR BABY DIED

WHEN our baby died—  
My Ma she ist cried an' cried!  
Yes 'n' my Pa *he* cried, too—  
An' *I* cried—An' me an' you.—  
An' I 'tended like my doll  
She cried too—An' ever'—all—  
O ist *ever'body* cried  
When our baby died!

When our baby died—  
Nen I got to took a ride!  
An' we all ist rode an' rode  
Clean to Heav'n where baby goed—  
Mighty nigh!—An' nen Ma she  
Cried ag'in—an' Pa—an' me.—  
All but ist the *Angels* cried  
When our baby died!

## CHRISTINE BRAIBRY

### THE BEAUTIFUL DOLLY WHO COMES FROM TENTOLEENA LAND BRINGING A STRANGE LETTER

#### *The Letter*

THIS little Dolly's name is Christine Braibry.\* She was born in Tentoleena Land, where lilies and red roses grow in the air, and humming-birds and butterflies on stalks.

You must be kind to Christine, for everything about her in your land will be very strange to her. If she seems to stare in a bewildered way, and will not answer when you ask her why, you must know that she is simply dazed with the wonders that she sees on every hand. It will doubtless be a long, long while before Christine will cease to marvel at the Sunshine of your strange country; for in Ten-

\*The terminal of this name is sounded short, as in "lovely."



## CHRISTINE BRAIBRY

toleena Land there is never any shine but Moonshine, and sometimes that gets so muddied up with shade it soils the eyesight to gaze at it overmuch.

It will be trying, in your land, for Christine to keep silent all the time, for, in your country, Dollies cannot walk and talk at all perfectly, because they only think they are dreaming all the time, and they dare not speak for fear their voices will awaken them, and they dare not move for fear of falling out of bed. So, you see, you should be very kind indeed to little Christine Braibry.

In Tentoleena Land the Dollies do not sleep long—they are always the first ones up at Moon-dawn—for Moon-dawn is the Dollies' morning. Then they go out in the fragrant grasses, where the big, ripe dewdrops grow—much nicer, purer dew than yours on earth, for in Tentoleena Land they gather it before it has been skimmed, and all the pearly cream that gathers on the surface of the drops they stir up with the rest and bathe in that; and this is why the Dollies always have such delicate complexions. Then, when the baths are over, they dress themselves, and waken their parents,

## CHRISTINE BRAIBRY

and dress them—for in Tentoleena Land the parents are the children. Is not that odd?

Sometime Christine may get used to your strange land and all the wonders that she sees; and if she ever does, and smiles at you, and pulls your face down close to hers and kisses you, why, that will be the sign by which you'll know she's coming to again and wants to talk; and so the first thing you must ask of her is to sing this little song she made of Tentoleena Land. Only the words of it can be given here—(not half the beauty of the dainty song)—for when you *hear* it, in the marvelously faint, and low, and sweet, and tender, tinkling tongue of Tentoleena Land, you will indeed be glad that the gracious fairy Fortune ever sent you Christine Braibry.

So, since all the sounds in the melodious utterance of Tentoleena Land are so exquisitely, so chastely, rarely beautiful no earthly art may hope to reproduce them, you must, as you here read the words, just shut your eyes and *fancy* that you hear little Christine Braibry singing this eerie song of hers:—

## CHRISTINE'S SONG

Up in Tentoleena Land—

Tentoleena! Tentoleena!

All the Dollies, hand in hand,

Mina, Nainie, and Serena,

Dance the Fairy fancy dances,

With glad songs and starry glances,

Lispings roundelays; and, after,

Bird-like interludes of laughter

Strewn and scattered o'er the lawn

Their gilt sandals twinkle on

Through light mists of silver sand

Up in Tentoleena Land.

Up in Tentoleena Land—

Tentoleena! Tentoleena!

Blares the eerie Elfin band—

Trumpet, harp and concertina—

Larkspur bugle—honeysuckle

Cornet, with a quickstep chuckle

In its golden throat; and, maybe,

Lilies-of-the-valley they be

CHRISTINE BRAIBRY

Baby-silver-bells that chime  
Musically all the time,  
Tossed about from hand to hand—  
Up in Tentoleena Land.

Up in Tentoleena Land—  
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!  
Dollies dark, and blonde and bland—  
Sweet as musk-rose or verbena—  
Sweet as moon-blown daffodillies,  
Or wave-jostled water-lilies,  
Yearning to'rd the rose-mouths, ready  
Leaning o'er the river's eddy,—  
Dance, and glancing fling to you,  
Through these lines you listen to,  
Kisses blown from lip and hand  
Out of Tentoleena Land!

## THE SQUIRT-GUN UNCLE MAKED ME

UNCLE SIDNEY, when he was here,  
Maked me a squirt-gun out o' some  
Elder-bushes 'at growed out near  
Where wuz the brick-yard—'way out clear  
To where the Toll Gate come!

So when we walked back home again,  
He maked it, out in our woodhouse where  
Wuz the old work-bench, an' the old jack-plane,  
An' the old 'poke-shave, an' the tools all lay'n'  
Ist like he wants 'em there.

He sawed it first with the old hand-saw;  
An' nen he peeled off the bark, an' got  
Some glass an' scraped it; an' told 'bout Pa,  
When *he* wuz a boy an' fooled his Ma,  
An' the whippin' 'at he caught.

THE SQUIRT-GUN UNCLE MAKED ME

Nen Uncle Sidney, he took an' filed  
A' old arn ramrod; an' one o' the ends  
He screwed fast into the vise; an' smiled,  
Thinkin', he said, o' when he wuz a child,  
'Fore him an' Pa wuz mens.

He punched out the peth, an' nen he putt  
A plug in the end with a hole notched through;  
Nen took the old drawey-knife an' cut  
An' maked a handle 'at shoved clean shut  
But ist where yer hand held to.

An' he wropt th'uther end with some string an'  
white  
Piece o' the sleeve of a' old tored shirt;  
An' nen he showed me to hold it tight,  
An' suck in the water an' work it right.—  
An' it 'ud ist squirt an' squirt!

## THE BROOK-SONG

LITTLE brook! Little brook!  
You have such a happy look—  
Such a very merry manner, as you swerve and  
    curve and crook—  
And your ripples, one and one,  
Reach each other's hands and run  
    Like laughing little children in the sun!

Little brook, sing to me:  
Sing about a bumblebee  
That tumbled from a lily-bell and grumbled mum-  
    blingly,  
Because he wet the film  
Of his wings, and had to swim,  
    While the water-bugs raced round and  
    laughed at him!

THE BROOK-SONG

Little brook—sing a song  
Of a leaf that sailed along  
Down the golden-braided centre of your current  
    swift and strong,  
And a dragon-fly that lit  
On the tilting rim of it,  
    And rode away and wasn't scared a bit.

And sing—how oft in glee  
Came a truant boy like me,  
Who loved to lean and listen to your lilting melody,  
Till the gurgle and refrain  
Of your music in his brain  
    Wrought a happiness as keen to him as  
    pain.

Little brook—laugh and leap!  
Do not let the dreamer weep:  
Sing him all the songs of summer till he sink in  
    softest sleep;  
And then sing soft and low  
Through his dreams of long ago—  
    Sing back to him the rest he used to know!



## THE YOUTHFUL PRESS.

LITTLE Georgie Tompers, he  
Printed some fine cards for me;  
But his press had "J" for *James*—  
By no means the choice of names.—

Yet it's proper, none the less,  
That his little printing-press  
Should be taught that *James* for "J"  
Always is the better way.

For, if left to its own whim,  
Next time it might call me "Jim,"—  
Then THE CULTURED PRESS would be  
Shocked at such a liberty.

Therefore, little presses all  
Should be trained, while they are small,  
To develop *taste* in these  
Truths that shape our destinies.

## THAT-AIR YOUNG-UN

THAT-AIR young-un ust to set  
By the crick here day by day,—  
Watch the swallers dip and wet  
Their slim wings and skoot away;  
Watch these little snipes along  
The low banks tilt up and down  
'Mongst the reeds, and hear the song  
Of the bullfrogs croakin' roun':  
Ust to set here in the sun  
Watchin' things, and listenun,  
'Peared-like, mostly to the roar  
Of the dam below, er to  
That-air riffle nigh the shore  
Jes acrost from me and you.  
Ust to watch him from the door  
Of the mill.—Ud rigg him out  
With a fishin'-pole and line—  
Dig worms fer him—nigh about

THAT-AIR YOUNG-UN

Jes spit on his bait!—but he  
Never keered much, 'pearantly,  
To ketch fish!—He 'druther fine  
Out some sunny place, and set  
Watchin' things, with droopy head,  
And "a-listenun," he said—  
"Kindo' listenun above  
The old crick to what the wet  
Warter was a-talkin' of!"

Jevver hear sich talk as that?  
Bothered *Mother* more'n me  
What the child was ciper'n' at.—  
Come home onc't and said 'at he  
Knowed what the snake-feeders thought  
When they grit their wings; and knowed  
Turkle-talk, when bubbles riz  
Over where the old roots growed  
Where he th'owed them pets o' his—  
Little turripuns he caught  
In the County Ditch and packed  
In his pockets days and days!—  
Said he knowed what goslin's quacked—  
Could tell what the killdees sayes,

And grasshoppers, when they lit  
 In the crick and "minnies" bit  
 Off their legs.—"But, *blame!*" says he,  
 Sorto' lookin' clean above  
 Mother's head and on through me—  
 (And them eyes!—I see 'em yet!)—  
 "*Blame!*" he says, "ef I kin see,  
 Er make *out*, jes what the wet  
 Warter is a-talkin' of!"

Made me *nervous!* Mother, though,  
 Said best not to scold the child—  
 The Good Bein' knowed.—And so  
 We was only rickonciled  
 When he'd be asleep.—And then,  
 Time, and time, and time again,  
 We've watched over him, you know—  
 Her a-sayin' nothin'—jes  
 Kindo' smoothin' back his hair,  
 And, all to herse'f, I guess,  
 Studyin' up some kind o' prayer  
 She ain't tried yet.—Onc't she said,  
 Cotin' Scriptur', "'He,'" says she,  
 In a solemn whisper, "'He  
 Givuth His beloved sleep!'"

THAT-AIR YOUNG-UN

And jes then I heerd the rain  
Strike the shingles, as I turned  
Res'less to'rds the wall again.  
Pity strong men dast to weep!—  
Specially when up above  
*Thrash!* the storm comes down and you  
Feel the midnight plum soaked through  
Heart and soul, and wunder, too,  
What the warter's talkin' of!

. . . . .

Found his hat 'way down below  
Hinchman's Ford.—'Ves' Anders he  
Rid and fetched it. Mother she  
Went *wild* over that, you know—  
Hugged it! kissed it!—*Turribul!*  
My hopes then was all gone too. . . .  
Brung him in, with both hands full  
O' warter-lilies—'peared-like new-  
Bloomed fer him—renched whiter still  
In the clear rain, mixin' fine  
And finer in the noon sunshine. . . .

THAT-AIR YOUNG-UN

Winders of the old mill looked  
On him where the hill-road crooked  
In on through the open gate. . . .  
Laid him on the old settee  
On the porch there. Heerd the great  
Roarin' dam acrost—and we  
Heerd a crane cry in amongst  
The sycamores—and then a dove  
Cutterin' on the mill-roof—then  
Heerd the crick, and thought again,  
“*Now* what's it a-talkin' of?”

## BABY'S DYING

BABY'S dying,

Do not stir—

Let her spirit lightly float

Through the sighing

Lips of her—

Still the murmur in the throat;

Let the moan of grief be curbed—

Baby must not be disturbed!

Baby's dying,

Do not stir—

Let her pure life lightly swim

Through the sighing

Lips of her—

Out from us and up to HIM—

Let her leave us with that smile—

Kiss and miss her after while.

## THE BOYS

WHERE are they?—the friends of my childhood  
enchanted—

The clear, laughing eyes looking back in my own,  
And the warm, chubby fingers my palms have so  
wanted,

As when we raced over

Pink pastures of clover,

And mocked the quail's whir and the bumblebee's  
drone?

Have the breezes of time blown their blossomy  
faces

Forever adrift down the years that are flown?

Am I never to see them romp back to their places,  
Where over the meadow,

In sunshine and shadow,

The meadow-larks trill, and the bumblebees drone?



THE BOYS

Where are they? Ah! dim in the dust lies the  
    clover;

The whippoorwill's call has a sorrowful tone,  
And the dove's—I have wept at it over and over;—

I want the glad lustre

    Of youth, and the cluster

Of faces asleep where the bumblebees drone!

## OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME

### I

In the jolly winters  
Of the long-ago,  
It was not so cold as now—  
O! No! No!  
Then, as I remember,  
Snowballs to eat  
Were as good as apples now,  
And every bit as sweet!

### II

In the jolly winters  
Of the dead-and-gone,  
Bub was warm as summer,  
With his red mitts on,—

OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME

Just in his little waist-  
And-pants all together,  
Who ever heard him growl  
About cold weather?

III

In the jolly winters  
Of the long-ago—  
Was it *half* so cold as now?  
O! No! No!  
Who caught his death o' cold,  
Making prints of men  
Flat-backed in snow that now's  
Twice as cold again?

IV

In the jolly winters  
Of the dead-and-gone,  
Startin' out rabbit huntin'—  
Early as the dawn,—

OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME

Who ever froze his fingers,  
Ears, heels, or toes,—  
Or'd 'a' cared if he had?  
Nobody knows!

V

Nights by the kitchen-stove,  
Shellin' white and red  
Corn in the skillet, and  
Sleepin' four abed!  
Ah! the jolly winters  
Of the long-ago!  
We were not as old as now—  
O! No! No!

## THE SONG OF YESTERDAY

### I

BUT yesterday  
I looked away  
O'er happy lands, where sunshine lay  
In golden blots  
Inlaid with spots  
Of shade and wild forget-me-nots.

My head was fair  
With flaxen hair,  
And fragrant breezes, faint and rare,  
And, warm with drouth  
From out the south,  
Blew all my curls across my mouth.

And, cool and sweet,  
My naked feet  
Found dewy pathways through the wheat;  
And out again  
Where, down the lane,  
The dust was dimpled with the rain.

THE SONG OF YESTERDAY

II

But yesterday!—  
Adream, astray,  
From morning's red to evening's gray,  
O'er dales and hills  
Of daffodills  
And lorn sweet-fluting whippoorwills.

I knew nor cares  
Nor tears nor prayers—  
A mortal god, crowned unawares  
With sunset—and  
A sceptre-wand  
Of apple blossoms in my hand!

The dewy blue  
Of twilight grew  
To purple, with a star or two  
Whose lispings rays  
Failed in the blaze  
Of sudden fireflies through the haze.

III

But yesterday  
I heard the lay  
O summer birds, when I, as they  
With breast and wing,  
All quivering  
With life and love, could only sing.

My head was lent  
Where, with it, blent  
A maiden's o'er her instrument;  
While all the night,  
From vale to height,  
Was filled with echoes of delight.

And all our dreams  
Were lit with gleams  
Of that lost land of reedy streams,  
Along whose brim  
Forever swim  
Pan's lilies, laughing up at him.

IV

But yesterday! . . .  
O blooms of May,  
And summer roses—where away?  
O stars above;  
And lips of love,  
And all the honeyed sweets thereof!—

O lad and lass,  
And orchard pass,  
And briered lane, and daisied grass!  
O gleam and gloom,  
And woodland bloom,  
And breezy breaths of all perfume!—

No more for me  
Or mine shall be  
Thy raptures—save in memory,—  
No more—no more—  
Till through the Door  
Of Glory gleam the days of yore.



## DUSK-SONG—THE BEETLE

THE shrilling locust slowly sheathes  
His dagger-voice, and creeps away  
Beneath the brooding leaves where breathes  
The zephyr of the dying day:  
One naked star has waded through  
The purple shallows of the night,  
And faltering as falls the dew  
It drips its misty light.

*O'er garden blooms,  
On tides of musk,  
The beetle booms adown the glooms  
And bumps along the dusk.*

The katydid is rasping at  
The silence from the tangled broom:  
On drunken wings the flitting bat  
Goes staggering athwart the gloom;

DUSK-SONG—THE BEETLE

The toadstool bulges through the weeds,  
And lavishly to left and right  
The fireflies, like golden seeds,  
Are sown about the night.

*O'er slumbrous blooms,  
On floods of musk,  
The beetle booms adown the glooms  
And bumps along the dusk.*

The primrose flares its baby-hands  
Wide open, as the empty moon,  
Slow lifted from the underlands,  
Drifts up the azure-arched lagoon;  
The shadows on the garden walk  
Are frayed with rifts of silver light;  
And, trickling down the poppy-stalk,  
The dewdrop streaks the night.

*O'er folded blooms,  
On swirls of musk,  
The beetle booms adown the glooms  
And bumps along the dusk.*

## BABYHOOD

HEIGH-HO! Babyhood! Tell me where you linger!

Let's toddle home again, for we have gone astray;

Take this eager hand of mine and lead me by the finger

Back to the lotus-lands of the far-away!

Turn back the leaves of life.—Don't read the story.—

Let's find the pictures, and fancy all the rest;  
We can fill the written pages with a brighter glory  
Than old Time, the story-teller, at his very best.

Turn to the brook where the honeysuckle tipping  
O'er its vase of perfume spills it on the breeze,  
And the bee and humming-bird in ecstasy are sipping

From the fairy-flagons of the blooming locust-trees.

## BABYHOOD

Turn to the lane where we used to "teeter-totter,"  
    Printing little foot-palms in the mellow mould—  
Laughing at the lazy cattle wading in the water  
    Where the ripples dimple round the buttercups  
        of gold.

Where the dusky turtle lies basking on the gravel  
    Of the sunny sand-bar in the middle tide,  
And the ghostly dragon-fly pauses in his travel  
    To rest like a blossom where the water-lily died.

Heigh-ho! Babyhood! Tell me where you linger!  
    Let's toddle home again, for we have gone  
        astray;  
Take this eager hand of mine and lead me by the  
    finger  
    Back to the lotus-lands of the far-away!

## MAX AND JIM

MAX an' Jim,  
They're each other's  
Fat an' slim  
Little brothers.

Max is thin,  
An' Jim, the fac's is,  
Fat ag'in  
As little Max is!

Their Pa 'lowed  
He don't know whuther  
He's most proud  
Of one er th'other!

Their Ma says  
They're both so sweet—'m!—  
That she guess  
She'll haf to eat 'em!

## THE CIRCUS-DAY PARADE

OH! the Circus-Day Parade! How the bugles  
played and played!

Aud how the glossy horses tossed their flossy manes  
and neighed,

As the rattle and the rhyme of the tenor-drum-  
mer's time

Filled all the hungry hearts of us with melody  
sublime!

How the grand band-wagon shone with a splendor  
all its own,

And glittered with a glory that our dreams had  
never known!

And how the boys behind, high and low of every  
kind,

Marched in unconscious capture, with a rapture  
undefined!

## THE CIRCUS-DAY PARADE

How the horsemen, two and two, with their plumes  
of white and blue  
And crimson, gold and purple, nodding by at me  
and you,  
Waved the banners that they bore, as the knights  
in days of yore,  
Till our glad eyes gleamed and glistened like the  
spangles that they wore!

How the graceless-graceful stride of the elephant  
was eyed,  
And the capers of the little horse that cantered at  
his side!  
How the shambling camels, tame to the plaudits  
of their fame,  
With listless eyes came silent, masticating as they  
came.

How the cages jolted past, with each wagon bat-  
tened fast,  
And the mystery within it only hinted of at last  
From the little grated square in the rear, and  
nosing there  
The snout of some strange animal that sniffed the  
outer air!

THE CIRCUS-DAY PARADE

And, last of all, The Clown, making mirth for all  
the town,  
With his lips curved ever upward and his eye-  
brows ever down,  
And his chief attention paid to the little mule that  
played  
A tattoo on the dash-board with his heels, in the  
Parade.

Oh! the Circus-Day Parade! How the bugles  
played and played!  
And how the glossy horses tossed their flossy  
manes and neighed,  
As the rattle and the rhyme of the tenor-drum-  
mer's time  
Filled all the hungry hearts of us with melody sub-  
lime!



## THE OLD HAY-MOW

THE Old Hay-mow's the place to play  
Fer boys, when it's a rainy day!  
I good 'eal ruther be up there  
Than down in town, er anywhere!

When I play in our stable-loft,  
The good old hay's so dry an' soft,  
An' feels so fine, an' smells so sweet,  
I 'most ferget to go an' eat.

An' one time onc't I *did* ferget  
To go tel dinner was all et,—  
An' they had short-cake—an'—Bud he  
Hogged up the piece Ma saved fer me!

Nen I won't let him play no more  
In our hay-mow where I keep store  
An' got hen-eggs to sell,—an' shoo  
The cackle-un old hen out, too!

THE OLD HAY-MOW

An' nen, when Aunty she was here  
A-visitun from Rensselaer,  
An' bringed my little cousin,—*he*  
Can come up there an' play with me.

But, after while—when Bud he bets  
'At I can't turn no summersetts,  
I let him come up, ef he can  
Ac' ha'f-way like a gentleman!

## JOHN TARKINGTON JAMESON

JOHN JAMESON, my jo John!  
Ye're bonnie wee an' sma';  
Your ee's the morning violet,  
Wi' tremblin' dew an' a';  
Your smile's the gowden simmer-sheen,  
Wi' glintin' pearls aglow  
Atween the posies o' your lips,  
John Jameson, my jo!

Ye hae the faither's braith o' brow,  
An' synes his look benign  
Whiles he hings musin' ower the burn,  
Wi' leestless hook an' line;  
Ye hae the mither's mou' an' cheek  
An' denty chin—but O!  
It's maist ye're like your ain braw sel',  
John Jameson, my jo!

JOHN TARKINGTON JAMESON

John Jameson, my jo John,  
Though, wi' sic lovers twain,  
Ye dance far yont your whustlin' frien'  
Wha laggart walks his lane,—  
Be mindet, though he naps his last  
Whaur kirkyird thistles grow,  
His ghaist shall caper on wi' you,  
John Jameson, my jo!

## GUINEY-PIGS

GUINEY-PIGS is awful cute,  
With their little trimbly snoot  
Sniffin' at the pussly that  
We bring 'em to nibble at.

Looks like they're so clean an' white,  
An' so dainty an' polite,  
They could eat like you an' me  
When they's company!

Tiltin' down the clover-tops  
Till they spill, an' over drops  
The sweet morning dew—Don't you  
Think they might have napkins, too?

Ef a guiney-pig was big  
As a *shore-an'-certain* pig,  
Nen he wouldn't ac' so fine  
When he come to dine.

## GUINEY-PIGS

Nen he'd chomp his jaws an' eat  
Things out in the dirty street,  
Dirt an' all! An' nen lay down  
In mud-holes an' waller roun'!  
So the *guiney-pigs* is best,  
'Cause they're nice an' tidiest;  
They eat 'most like you an' me  
When they's company!

## BUSCH AND TOMMY

LITTLE Busch and Tommy Hays—  
Small the theme, but large the praise,—

For two braver brothers,  
Of such toddling years and size,  
Bloom of face, and blue of eyes,  
Never trampled soldier-wise  
On the rights of mothers!

Even boldly facing their  
Therapeutic father's air  
Of complex abstraction,  
But to kindle—kindlier gaze,  
Wake more smiles and gracious ways—  
Ay, nor find in all their days  
Ampler satisfaction!

Hail ye, then, with chirp and cheer,  
All wan patients, waiting here  
Bitterer medications!  
Busch and Tommy, *tone* us, too.—  
How our life-blood leaps anew,  
Under loving touch of you  
And your ministrations!

## HIS CHRISTMAS SLED

### I

I WATCH him, with his Christmas sled;  
He hitches on behind  
A passing sleigh, with glad hooray,  
And whistles down the wind;  
He hears the horses champ their bits,  
And bells that jingle-jingle—  
You Woolly Cap! you Scarlet Mitts!  
You miniature “Kris Kringle!”

I almost catch your secret joy—  
Your chucklings of delight,  
The while you whiz where glory is  
Eternally in sight!  
With you I catch my breath, as swift  
Your jaunty sled goes gliding  
O'er glassy track and shallow drift,  
As I behind were riding!



HIS CHRISTMAS SLED

II

He winks at twinklings of the frost,  
And on his airy race,  
Its tingles beat to redder heat  
The rapture of his face:—  
The colder, keener is the air,  
The less he cares a feather.  
But, there! he's gone! and I gaze on  
The wintriest of weather!

Ah, Boy! still speeding o'er the track  
Where none returns again,  
To sigh for you, or cry for you,  
Or die for you were vain.—  
And so, speed on! the while I pray  
All nipping frosts forsake you—  
Ride still ahead of grief, but may  
All glad things overtake you!

BABE HERRICK

As a rosebud might, in dreams,  
'Mid some lilies lie, meseems  
Thou, pink youngling, on the breast  
Of thy mother slumberest.

## THE LAND OF THUS-AND-SO

“How would Willie like to go  
To the Land of Thus-and-So?  
Everything is proper there—  
All the children comb their hair  
Smoother than the fur of cats,  
Or the nap of high silk hats;  
Every face is clean and white  
As a lily washed in light;  
Never vaguest soil or speck  
Found on forehead, throat or neck;  
Every little crimped ear,  
In and out, as pure and clear  
As the cherry-blossom’s blow  
In the Land of Thus-and-So.

“Little boys that never fall  
Down the stair, or cry at all—  
Doing nothing to repent,  
Watchful and obedient;

THE LAND OF THUS-AND-SO

Never hungry, nor in haste—  
Tidy shoe-strings always laced ;  
Never button rudely torn  
From its fellows all unworn ;  
Knickerbockers always new—  
Ribbon, tie, and collar, too ;  
Little watches, worn like men,  
Always promptly half-past ten—  
Just precisely right, you know,  
For the Land of Thus-and-So!

“And the little babies there  
Give no one the slightest care—  
Nurse has not a thing to do  
But be happy and sigh ‘Boo!’  
While Mamma just nods, and knows  
Nothing but to doze and doze :  
Never litter round the grate ;  
Never lunch or dinner late ;  
Never any household din  
Peals without or rings within—  
Baby coos nor laughing calls  
On the stairs or through the halls—  
Just Great Hushes to and fro  
Pace the Land of Thus-and-So!

THE LAND OF THUS-AND-SO

“Oh! the Land of Thus-and-So!—  
Isn't it delightful, though?”  
“Yes,” lisped Willie, answering me  
Somewhat slow and doubtfully—  
“Must be awful nice, but I  
Ruther wait till by and by  
'Fore I go there—maybe when  
I be dead I'll go there *then*.—  
But'—the troubled little face  
Closer pressed in my embrace—  
“Le's don't never *ever* go  
To the Land of Thus-and-So!”

## GRANDFATHER SQUEERS

“MY grandfather Squeers,” said The Raggedy  
Man,

As he solemnly lighted his pipe and began—

“The most indestructible man, for his years,  
And the grandest on earth, was my grandfather  
Squeers!

“He said, when he rounded his threescore-and-ten,  
‘I’ve the hang of it now and can do it again!’

“He had frozen his heels so repeatedly, he  
Could tell by them just what the weather would be;

“And would laugh and declare, ‘while *the Almanac*  
*would*  
Most falsely prognosticate, *he* never could!’

“Such a hale constitution had grandfather Squeers  
That, though he’d used ‘*navy*’ for sixty-odd years,

“He still chewed a dime’s-worth six days of the  
week,  
While the seventh he passed with a chew in each  
cheek.

GRANDFATHER SQUEERS

“ Then my grandfather Squeers had a singular  
knack

Of sitting around on the small of his back,

“ With his legs like a letter Y stretched o’er the  
grate

Wherein ’twas his custom to ex-pec-tor-ate.

“ He was fond of tobacco in *manifold* ways,  
And would sit on the door-step, of sunshiny days,

“ And smoke leaf-tobacco he’d raised strictly for  
The pipe he’d used all through The Mexican War.”

And The Raggedy Man said, refilling the bowl  
Of his *own* pipe and leisurely picking a coal

From the stove with his finger and thumb, “ You  
can see

What a tee-nacious habit he’s fastened on me!

And my grandfather Squeers took a special de-  
light

In pruning his corns every Saturday night

GRANDFATHER SQUEERS

With a horn-handled razor, whose edge he excused  
By saying 'twas one that his grandfather used ;

“And, though deeply etched in the haft of the  
same

Was the ever-euphonious Wostenholm's name,

“'Twas my grandfather's custom to boast of the  
blade

As 'A Seth Thomas razor—the best ever made!'

“No Old Settlers' Meeting, or Pioneers' Fair,  
Was complete without grandfather Squeers in the  
chair,

“To lead off the program by telling folks how  
'He used to shoot deer where the Court-House  
stands now'—

“How 'he felt, of a truth, to live over the past,  
When the country was wild and unbroken and  
vast,

“That the little log cabin was just plenty fine  
For himself, his companion, and fambly of nine!—



GRANDFATHER SQUEERS

“ ‘When they didn’t have even a pump, or a tin,  
But drunk surface-water, year out and year in,

“ ‘From the old-fashioned gourd that was sweeter,  
by odds,  
Than the goblets of gold at the lips of the gods!’ ”

Then The Raggedy Man paused to plaintively say  
It was clockin’ along to’rds the close of the day—

And he’d *ought* to get back to his work on the  
lawn,—

Then dreamily blubbered his pipe and went on:

“His teeth were imperfect—my grandfather owned  
That he couldn’t eat oysters unless they were  
‘boned’ ;

“And his eyes were so weak, and so feeble of  
sight,

He couldn’t sleep with them unless, every night,

“He put on his spectacles—all he possessed,—  
Three pairs—with his goggles on top of the rest.

“And my grandfather always, retiring at night,  
Blew down the lamp-chimney to put out the light ;

“Then he’d curl up on edge like a shaving, in bed,  
And puff and smoke pipes in his sleep, it is said:

“And would snore oftentimes, as the legends re-  
late,  
Till his folks were wrought up to a terrible state,—

“Then he’d snort, and rear up, and roll over; and  
there  
In the subsequent hush they could hear him chew  
air.

“And so glaringly bald was the top of his head  
That many’s the time he has musingly said,

“As his eyes journeyed o’er its reflex in the glass,—  
‘I must set out a few signs of *Keep Off the Grass!*’

“So remarkably deaf was my grandfather Squeers  
That he had to wear lightning-rods over his ears

“To even hear thunder—and oftentimes then  
He was forced to request it to thunder again.’”

## THE LITTLE TINY KICKSHAW

O THE little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me,  
'Tis sweeter than the sugar-plum that reopens on  
the tree,

Wi' denty flavorin's o' spice an' musky rosemarie,  
The little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

'Tis luscious wi' the stalen tang o' fruits frae ower  
the sea,

An' e'en its fragrance gars me laugh wi' langin'  
lip an' ee,

Till a' its frazen sheen o' white maun melten  
hinnie be—

Sae weel I luv the kickshaw that Mither sent tae  
me.

O I luv the tiny kickshaw, an' I smack my lips  
wi' glee,

Aye mickle do I luv the taste o' sic a luxourie,  
But maist I luv the luvain' han's that could the  
giftie gie

O' the little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

## THE LUGUBRIOUS WHING-WHANG

THE rhyme o' The Raggedy Man's 'at's best  
Is Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs,  
'Cause that-un's the strangest of all o' the rest,  
An' the worst to learn, an' the last one guessed,  
An' the funniest one, an' the foolishhest.—  
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

I don't know what in the world it means—  
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!—  
An' nen when I *tell* him I don't, he leans  
Like he was a-grindin' on some machines  
An' says: Ef I *don't*, w'y, I don't know *beans*!  
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

Out on the margin of Moonshine Land,  
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!  
Out where the Whing-Whang loves to stand,  
Writing his name with his tail in the sand,  
And swiping it out with his oogerish hand;  
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

THE LUGUBRIOUS WHING-WHANG

Is it the gibber of Gungs or Keeks?

Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!  
Or what *is* the sound that the Whing-Whang  
seeks?—

Crouching low by the winding creeks,  
And holding his breath for weeks and weeks!  
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

Aroint him the wraithest of wraithly things!  
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!  
'Tis a fair Whing-Whangess, with phosphor rings,  
And bridal-jewels of fangs and stings;  
And she sits and as sadly and softly sings  
As the mildewed whirl of her own dead wings,—  
Tickle me, Dear,  
Tickle me here,  
Tickle me, Love, in me Lonesome Ribs!

## THE WAY THE BABY WOKE

AND this is the way the baby woke :  
As when in deepest drops of dew  
The shine and shadows sink and soak,  
The sweet eyes glimmered through and through ;  
And eddyings and dimples broke  
About the lips, and no one knew  
Or could divine the words they spoke—  
And this is the way the baby woke.

## McFEETERS' FOURTH

It was needless to say 'twas a glorious day,  
And to boast of it all in that spread-eagle way  
That our Forefathers had since the hour of the birth  
Of this most patriotic republic on earth!  
But 'twas justice, of course, to admit that the sight  
Of the old Stars-and-Stripes was a thing of delight  
In the eyes of a fellow, however he tried  
To look on the day with a dignified pride  
That meant not to brook any turbulent glee  
Or riotous flourish of loud jubilee!

So argued McFeeters, all grim and severe,  
Who the long night before, with a feeling of fear,  
Had slumbered but fitfully, hearing the swish  
Of the sky rocket over his roof, with the wish  
That the boy-fiend who fired it were fast to the end  
Of the stick to for ever and ever ascend!  
Or to hopelessly ask why the boy with the horn  
And its horrible havoc had ever been born!  
Or to wish, in his wakefulness, staring aghast,  
That this Fourth of July were as dead as the last!

So, yesterday morning, McFeeters arose,  
With a fire in his eyes, and a cold in his nose,  
And a guttural voice in appropriate key  
With a temper as gruff as a temper could be.  
He growled at the servant he met on the stair,  
Because he was whistling a national air,  
And he growled at the maid on the balcony, who  
Stood enrapt with the tune of "The Red-White-  
and-Blue"  
That a band was discoursing like mad in the street,  
With drumsticks that banged, and with cymbals  
that beat.

And he growled at his wife, as she buttoned his  
vest,  
And applaudively pinned a rosette on his breast  
Of the national colors, and lured from his purse  
Some change for the boys—for fire-crackers—or  
worse ;  
And she pointed with pride to a soldier in blue  
In a frame on the wall, and the colors there, too ;  
And he felt, as he looked on the features, the glow  
The painter found there twenty long years ago,



McFEETERS' FOURTH

And a passionate thrill in his breast, as he felt  
Instinctively round for the sword in his belt.

What was it that hung like a mist o'er the room?—  
The tumult without—and the music—the boom  
Of the cannon—the blare of the bugle and fife?—  
No matter!—McFeeters was kissing his wife,  
And laughing and crying and waving his hat  
Like a genuine soldier, and crazy, at that!  
—*Was* it needless to say 'twas a glorious day  
And to boast of it all in that spread-eagle way  
That our Forefathers had since the hour of the  
    birth  
Of this most patriotic republic on earth?

## LITTLE MANDY'S CHRISTMAS-TREE

LITTLE Mandy and her Ma  
'S porest folks you ever saw!—  
Lived in porest house in town,  
Where the fence 'uz all tore down.

And no front-door steps at all—  
Ist a' old box 'g'inst the wall;  
And no door-knob on the door  
Outside.—*My!* but they 'uz pore!

Wuz no winder-shutters on,  
And some of the *winders* gone,  
And where *they* 'uz broke they'd pas'e  
Ist brown paper 'crost the place.

*Tell* you! when it's *winter there*,  
And the snow ist ever'where,  
Little Mandy's Ma she say  
'Spec' they'll freeze to death some day.

Wunst my Ma and me—when we  
Be'n to church, and's goin' to be  
Chris'mus purty soon,—we went  
There—like the Committee sent.

LITTLE MANDY'S CHRISTMAS-TREE

*And-sir!* when we're in the door,  
Wuz no carpet on the floor,  
And no fire—and heels-and-head  
Little Mandy's tucked in bed!

And her Ma telled *my* Ma she  
Got no coffee but ist tea,  
And fried mush—and's all they had  
Sence her health broke down so bad.

Nen Ma hug and hold me where  
Little Mandy's layin' there;  
And she kiss her, too, and nen  
Mandy kiss my Ma again.

And my Ma she telled her *we*  
Goin' to have a Chris'mus-Tree,  
At the Sund'y School, 'at's fer  
ALL the childern, and fer *her*.

Little Mandy *think*—nen she  
Say, "What *is* a Chris'mus-Tree?" . . .  
Nen my Ma she gived *her* Ma  
Somepin' 'at I never saw,

LITTLE MANDY'S CHRISTMAS-TREE

And say she *must* take it,—and  
She ist maked her keep her hand  
Wite close shut,—and nen she *kiss*  
Her hand—shut ist like it is.

Nen we comed away. . . . And nen  
When its Chris'mus Eve again,  
And all of us childerns be  
At the Church and Chris'mus-Tree —

And all git our toys and things  
'At old Santy Claus he brings  
And puts on the Tree;—wite where  
The *big* Tree 'uz standin' there,

And the things 'uz all tooked down,  
And the childerns, all in town,  
Got their presents—nen we see  
They's a *little* Chris'mus-Tree

Wite *behind* the *big* Tree—so  
We can't see till *nen*, you know,—  
And it's all ist loaded down  
With the purtiest things in town!

LITTLE MANDY'S CHRISTMAS-TREE

And the teacher smile and say:  
"This-here Tree 'at's hid away  
It's marked '*Little Mandy's Tree*.'—  
Little Mandy! Where is she?"

Nen nobody say a word.—  
Stillest place you ever heard!—  
Till a man tiptoe up where  
Teacher's still a-waitin' there.

Nen the man he whispers, so  
Ist the *Teacher* hears, you know.  
Nen he tiptoe back and go  
Out the big door—ist as slow!

. . . . .

*Little Mandy*, though, *she* don't  
Answer—and Ma say "she won't  
*Never*, though each year they'll be  
'Little Mandy's Chris'mus-Tree'

Fer pore childern"—my Ma says—  
And *Committee* say they guess  
'Little Mandy's Tree' 'ull be  
Bigger than the *other* Tree!

## THE FUNNIEST THING IN THE WORLD

THE funniest thing in the world, I know,  
Is watchin' the monkeys 'at's in the show!—  
Jumpin' an' runnin' an' racin' roun',  
'Way up the top o' the pole; nen down!  
First they're here, an' nen they're there,  
An' ist a'most any an' ever'where!—  
Screechin' an' scratchin' wherever they go,  
They're the funniest thing in the world, I know!

They're the funniest thing in the world, I think:—  
Funny to watch 'em eat an' drink;  
Funny to watch 'em a-watchin' us,  
An' actin' 'most like grown folks does!—  
Funny to watch 'em p'tend to be  
Skeerd at their tail 'at they happen to see;—  
But the funniest thing in the world they do  
Is never to laugh, like me an' you!

## LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRIS'MUS

WE got it up a-purpose, jes fer little Johnts, you  
know;

His mother was so pore an' all, an' had to man-  
age so—

Jes bein' a War-widder, an' her pension mighty  
slim,

She'd take in weavin', er work out, er anything  
fer him!

An' little Johnts was puny-like—but law, *the nerve*  
he had!—

You'd want to kindo' pity him, but couldn't, very  
bad,—

His pants o' army-blanket an' his coat o' faded  
blue

Kep' hintin' of his father like, an' pity wouldn't do!

So we collogued together, onc't, one winter-time,  
'at we—

Jes me an' mother an' the girls, an' Wilse, John-  
Jack an' Free—

LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRIS'MUS

Would jine an' git up little Johnts, by time 'at  
Chris'mus come,  
Some sort o' doin's, don't you know, 'at would  
su'prise him some.

An' so, all on the quiet, Mother she turns in an'  
gits  
Some blue-janes—cuts an' makes a suit; an' then  
sets down an' knits  
A pair o' little galluses to go 'long with the rest—  
An' putts in a red-flannen back, an' buckle on the  
vest.—

The little feller'd be'n so much around our house,  
you see,  
An' be'n sich he'p to her an' all, an' handy as  
could be,  
'At Mother couldn't do too much fer little Johnts—  
No, *Sir!*  
She ust to jes declare 'at "he was meat-an'-drink  
to her!"



LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRIS'MUS

An' Piney, Lide, an' Madaline they watch their  
chance an' rid

To Fountaintown with Lijey's folks; an' bought  
a book, they did,

O' fairy tales, with pictur's in; an' got a little pair  
O' red-top boots 'at John-Jack said he'd be'n a-  
pricin' there.

An' Lide got him a little sword, an' Madaline, a  
drum;

An' shootin'-crackers—Lawzy-day! an' they're so  
danger-some!

An' Piney, ever' time the rest 'ud buy some other  
toy,

She'd take an' turn in then an' buy more candy  
fer the boy!

“Well,” thinks-says-I, when they got back, “*your*  
pocket-books is dry!”—

But little Johnts was there hisse'f that afternoon,  
so I—

Well, *all* of us kep' mighty mum, tel we got him  
away

By tellin' him be shore an' come to-morry—Chris'-  
mus Day—

LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRIS'MUS

An' fetch *his mother* 'long with him! An' how he  
scud acrost

The fields—his towhead, in the dusk, jes like a  
streak o' frost!—

His comfert flutter as he run—an' old Tige, don't  
you know,

A-jumpin' high for rabbits an' a ploughin' up the  
snow!

It must 'a' be'n 'most *ten* that night afore we got  
to bed—

With Wilse an' John-Jack he'ppin' us; an' Free-  
man in the shed,

An' Lide out with the lantern while he trimmed  
the Chris'mus Tree

Out of a little scrub-oak-top 'at suited to a "T"!

All night I dreamp' o' hearin' things a-skulkin'  
round the place—

An' "Old Kriss," with his whiskers off, an' freck-  
les on his face—

An' reindeers, shaped like shavin'-hosses at the  
cooper-shop,

A-stickin' down the chimbly, with their heels out  
at the top!

LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRIS'MUS

By time 'at Mother got me up 'twas plum day-  
light an' more—  
The front yard full o' neighbors all a-crowdin'  
round the door,  
With John'ts's mother leadin'; yes—an' little  
John'ts hisse'f,  
Set up on Freeman's shoulder, like a jug [up on  
the she'f!

Of course I can't describe it when they all got in  
to where  
We'd conjered up the Chris'mus-Tree an' all the  
fixin's there!—  
Fer all the shouts o' laughture—clappin' hands,  
an' crackin' jokes,  
Was heap o' kissin' goin' on amongst the women-  
folks:—

Fer, lo-behold-ye! there they had that young-un!—  
An' his chin  
A-wobblin'-like;—an', shore enough, at last he  
started in—  
An'—sich another bellerin', in all my mortal days,  
I never heerd, er 'spect to hear, in woe's app'inted  
ways!

LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRIS'MUS

An' Mother grabs him up an' says: "It's more'n  
he can bear—

It's all too *sudden* fer the child, an' too su'prisin'!  
—*There!*"

"Oh, no it ain't"—sobbed little Johnts—"I ain't  
su'prised—but I'm

A-cryin' 'cause I watched you all, an' knowed it  
all the time!"

## THE ORCHARD LANDS OF LONG AGO

THE orchard lands of Long Ago!  
O drowsy winds, awake, and blow  
The snowy blossoms back to me,  
And all the buds that used to be!  
Blow back along the grassy ways  
Of truant feet, and lift the haze  
Of happy summer from the trees  
That trail their tresses in the seas  
Of grain that float and overflow  
The orchard lands of Long Ago!

Blow back the melody that slips  
In lazy laughter from the lips  
That marvel much if any kiss  
Is sweeter than the apple's is.  
Blow back the twitter of the birds—  
The lisp, the titter, and the words

THE ORCHARD LANDS OF LONG AGO

Of merriment that found the shine  
Of summer-time a glorious wine  
That drenched the leaves that loved it so,  
In orchard lands of Long Ago!

O memory! alight and sing  
Where rosy-bellied pippins cling,  
And golden russets glint and gleam,  
As, in the old Arabian dream,  
The fruits of that enchanted tree  
The glad Aladdin robbed for me!  
And, drowsy winds, awake and fan  
My blood as when it overran  
A heart ripe as the apples grow  
In orchard lands of Long Ago!

## THE BOYS' CANDIDATE

LAS' time 'at Uncle Sidney come,  
He bringed a watermelon home—  
An' half the boys in town  
Come taggin' after him.—An' he  
Says, when we et it,—“*Gracious me!*  
*'S the boy-house fell down?*”

## THE BUMBLEBEE

You better not fool with a Bumblebee!—  
Ef you don't think they can sting—you'll see!  
They're lazy to look at, an' kindo' go  
Buzzin' an' bummin' aroun' so slow,  
An' ac' so slouchy an' all fagged out,  
Danglin' their legs as they drone about  
The hollyhawks 'at they can't climb in  
'Ithout ist a-tumble-un out ag'in!  
Wunst I watched one climb clean 'way  
In a jimson-blossom, I did, one day,—  
An' I ist grabbed it—an' nen let go—  
An' "*Ooh-oooh! Honey! I told ye so!*"  
Says the Raggedy Man; an' he ist run  
An' pullt out the stinger, an' don't laugh none,  
An' says: "They *has* be'n folks, I guess,  
'At thought I wuz prejudust, more er less,—  
Yit I still muntain 'at a Bumblebee  
Wears out his welcome too quick fer me!"



## HE CALLED HER IN

### I

HE called her in from me and shut the door.  
And she so loved the sunshine and the sky!—  
She loved them even better yet than I  
That ne'er knew dearth of them—my mother dead,  
Nature had nursed me in her lap instead:  
And I had grown a dark and eerie child  
That rarely smiled,  
Save when, shut all alone in grasses high,  
Looking straight up in God's great lonesome sky  
And coaxing Mother to smile back on me.  
Twas lying thus, this fair girl suddenly  
Came on me, nestled in the fields beside  
A pleasant-seeming home, with doorway wide—  
The sunshine beating in upon the floor  
Like golden rain.—  
O sweet, sweet face above me, turn again  
And leave me! I had cried, but that an ache  
Within my throat so gripped it I could make

HE CALLED HER IN

No sound but a thick sobbing. Cowering so,  
I felt her light hand laid  
Upon my hair—a touch that ne'er before  
Had tamed me thus, all soothed and unafraid—  
It seemed the touch the children used to know  
When Christ was here, so dear it was—so dear,—  
At once I loved her as the leaves love dew  
In midmost summer when the days are new.  
Barely an hour I knew her, yet a curl  
Of silken sunshine did she clip for me  
Out of the bright May-morning of her hair,  
And bound and gave it to me laughingly,  
And caught my hands and called me "*Little girl,*"  
Tiptoeing, as she spoke, to kiss me there!  
And I stood dazed and dumb for very stress  
Of my great happiness.  
She plucked me by the gown, nor saw how mean  
The raiment—drew me with her everywhere:  
Smothered her face in tufts of grasses green:  
Put up her dainty hands and peeped between  
Her fingers at the blossoms—crooned and talked  
To them in strange, glad whispers, as we walked,—  
Said *this* one was her angel mother—*this*,  
Her baby-sister—come back, for a kiss,

HE CALLED HER IN

Clean from the Good-World!—smiled and kissed  
them, then

Closed her soft eyes and kissed them o'er again.

And so did she beguile me—so we played,—

She was the dazzling Shine—I, the dark Shade—

And we did mingle like to these, and thus,

Together, made

The perfect summer, pure and glorious.

So blent we, till a harsh voice broke upon

Our happiness.—She, startled as a fawn,

Cried, “Oh, 'tis Father!”—all the blossoms gone

From out her cheeks as those from out her grasp.—

Harsher the voice came:—She could only gasp

Affrightedly, “Good-bye!—good-bye! good-

bye!”

And lo, I stood alone, with that harsh cry

Ringling a new and unknown sense of shame

Through soul and frame,

And, with wet eyes, repeating o'er and o'er,—

“He called her in from me and shut the door!”

## II

He called her in from me and shut the door!  
 And I went wandering alone again—  
 So lonely—O so very lonely then,  
 I thought no little sallow star, alone  
 In all a world of twilight, e'er had known  
 Such utter loneliness. But that I wore  
 Above my heart that gleaming tress of hair  
 To lighten up the night of my despair,  
 I think I might have groped into my grave  
 Nor cared to wave  
 The ferns above it with a breath of prayer.  
 And how I hungered for the sweet, sweet face  
 That bent above me in my hiding-place  
 That day amid the grasses there beside  
 Her pleasant home!—"Her *pleasant* home!" I  
     sighed,  
 Remembering;—then shut my teeth and feigned  
 The harsh voice calling *me*,—then clinched my  
     nails  
 So deeply in my palms, the sharp wounds pained,  
 And tossed my face toward heaven, as one who  
     pales

### HE CALLED HER IN

In splendid martyrdom, with soul serene,  
As near to God as high the guillotine.  
And I had *envied* her? Not that—O no!  
But I had longed for some sweet haven so!—  
Wherein the tempest-beaten heart might ride  
Sometimes at peaceful anchor, and abide  
Where those that loved me touched me with their  
    hands,  
And looked upon me with glad eyes, and slipped  
Smooth fingers o'er my brow, and lulled the strands  
Of my wild tresses, as they backward tipped  
My yearning face and kissed it satisfied.  
Then bitterly I murmured as before,—  
“He called her in from me and shut the door!”

### III

He called her in from me and shut the door!  
After long struggling with my pride and pain—  
A weary while it seemed, in which the more  
I held myself from her, the greater fain  
Was I to look upon her face again;—  
At last—at last—half conscious where my feet  
Were faring, I stood waist-deep in the sweet  
Green grasses there where she  
First came to me.—

HE CALLED HER IN

The very blossoms she had plucked that day,  
And, at her father's voice, had cast away,  
Around me lay,  
Still bright and blooming in these eyes of mine ;  
And as I gathered each one eagerly,  
I pressed it to my lips and drank the wine  
Her kisses left there for the honey-bee.  
Then, after I had laid them with the tress  
Of her bright hair with lingering tenderness,  
I, turning, crept on to the hedge that bound  
Her pleasant-seeming home—but all around  
Was never sign of her!—The windows all  
Were blinded ; and I heard no rippling fall  
Of her glad laugh, nor any harsh voice call ;—  
But, clutching to the tangled grasses, caught  
A sound as though a strong man bowed his head  
And sobbed alone—unloved—uncomforted!—  
And then straightway before  
My tearless eyes, all vividly, was wrought  
A vision that is with me evermore :—  
A little girl that lies asleep, nor hears  
Nor heeds not any voice nor fall of tears.—  
And I sit singing o'er and o'er and o'er,—  
“God called her in from him and shut the door!”

## THE BOY-FRIEND

CLARENCE, my boy-friend, hale and strong!

O he is as jolly as he is young;  
And all of the laughs of the lyre belong  
To the boy all unsung:

So I want to sing something in his behalf—

To clang some chords, for the good it is  
To know he is near, and to have the laugh  
Of that wholesome voice of his.

I want to tell him in gentler ways

Than prose may do, that the arms of rhyme,  
Warm and tender with tuneful praise,  
Are about him all the time.

I want him to know that the quietest nights

We have passed together are yet with me,  
Roistering over the old delights  
That were born of his company.

THE BOY-FRIEND

I want him to know how my soul esteems  
The fairy stories of Andersen,  
And the glad translations of all the themes  
Of the hearts of boyish men.

Want him to know that my fancy flows,  
With the lilt of a dear old-fashioned tune,  
Through "Lewis Carroll's" poemly prose,  
And the tale of "The Bold Dragoon."

O this is the Prince that I would sing—  
Would drape and garnish in velvet line,  
Since courtlier far than any king  
Is this brave boy-friend of mine.



## WHEN THE WORLD BU'STS THROUGH

[*Casually Suggested by an Earthquake*]

WHERE'S a boy a-goin',  
An' what's he goin' to do,  
An' how's he goin' to do it,  
When the world bu'sts through?  
Ma she says "she can't tell  
What we're comin' to!"  
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered  
Clean—plum—through!"

S'pose we'd be a-playin'  
Out in the street,  
An' the ground 'ud split up  
'Bout forty feet!—  
Ma says "she ist knows  
*We* 'ud tumble in";  
An' Pop says "he bets you  
*Nen* we wouldn't grin!"

S'pose we'd ist be 'tendin'  
Like we had a show,  
Down in the stable  
Where we mustn' go,—

WHEN THE WORLD BU'STS THROUGH

Ma says, "The earthquake  
Might make it fall";  
An' Pop says, "More'n like  
Swaller barn an' all!"

Landy! ef we both wuz  
Runnin' 'way from school,  
Out in the shady woods  
Where it's all so cool!—  
Ma says "a big tree  
Might squish our head";  
An' Pop says, "Chop 'em out  
Both—killed—dead!"

But where's a boy goin',  
An' what's he goin' to do,  
An' how's he goin' to do it,  
Ef the world bu'sts through?  
Ma she says "she can't tell  
What we're comin' to!"  
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered  
Clean—plum—through!"

## A PROSPECTIVE GLIMPSE

JANEY PETTIBONE's the best  
Little girl an' purtiest  
In this town! an' lives next door,  
Up-stairs over their old store.

Little Janey Pettibone  
An' her Ma lives all alone,—  
'Cause her Pa broke up, an' nen  
Died 'cause they ain't rich again.

Little Janey's Ma she sews  
Fer my Ma sometimes, an' goes  
An' gives music-lessuns—where  
People's got pianers there.

But when Janey Pettibone  
Grows an' grows, like I'm a growin',  
Nen *I'm* go' to keep a store,  
An' sell things—an' sell some more—

Till I'm ist as rich!—An' nen  
*Her Ma* can be rich again,—  
Ef *I'm* rich enough to own  
Little Janey Pettibone!

## THE OLD TRAMP

A' OLD Tramp slep' in our stable wunst,  
An' The Raggedy Man he caught  
An' roust him up, an' chased him off  
Clean out through our back lot!

An' th' old Tramp hollered back an' said,—  
“You're a *purty* man!—*You* air!—  
With a pair o' eyes like two fried eggs,  
An' a nose like a Bartlutt pear!”

## CURLY LOCKS

*Curly Locks! Curly Locks! wilt thou be mine?  
Thou shalt not wash the dishes, nor yet feed the  
swine,—*

*But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,  
And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream.*

Curly Locks! Curly Locks! wilt thou be mine?  
The throb of my heart is in every line,  
And the pulse of a passion as airy and glad  
In its musical beat as the little Prince had!

Thou shalt not wash the dishes, nor yet feed the  
swine!—

O I'll dapple thy hands with these kisses of mine  
Till the pink of the nail of each finger shall be  
As a little pet blush in full blossom for me.

But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,  
And thou shalt have fabric as fair as a dream,—  
The red of my veins, and the white of my love,  
And the gold of my joy for the braiding thereof.

CURLY LOCKS

And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream  
From a service of silver, with jewels a gleam,—  
At thy feet will I bide, at thy beck will I rise,  
And twinkle my soul in the night of thine eyes!

*Curly Locks! Curly Locks! wilt thou be mine?  
Thou shalt not wash the dishes, nor yet feed the  
swine,—  
But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,  
And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream.*

## THE PET-COON

NOEY BIXLER ketched him, an' fetched him in to  
me

When he's ist a little teenty-weenty baby-coon  
'Bout as big as little pups, an' tied him to a tree;  
An' Pa gived Noey fifty cents, when he come  
home at noon.

Nen he buyed a chain fer him, an' little collar, too,  
An' sawed a hole in a' old tub an' turnt it upside  
down;

An' little feller'd stay in there and won't come out  
fer you—

'Tendin' like he's kindo' skeered o' boys 'at  
lives in town.

*Now* he ain't afeard a bit! he's ist so fat an' tame,  
We on'y chain him up at night, to save the little  
chicks.

Holler "Greedy! Greedy!" to him, an' he knows  
his name,

An' here he'll come a-waddle-un, up fer any  
tricks!

THE PET COON

He'll climb up my leg, he will, an' waller in my  
lap,  
An' poke his little black paws 'way in my pock-  
ets where  
They's beechnuts, er chinkypins, er any little scrap  
Of anything 'at's good to eat—an' *he* don't care!

An' he's as spunky as you please, an' don't like  
dogs at all.—

Billy Miller's black-an'-tan tackled him one day,  
An' "Greedy" he ist kindo' doubled all up like a  
ball,

An' Billy's dog he gived a yelp er two an' runned  
away!

An' nen when Billy foughted me, an' hit me with a  
bone,

An' Ma she purt' nigh ketched him as he dodged  
an' scooted through

The fence, she says, "You better let my little boy  
alone,

Or 'Greedy,' next he whips yer dog, shall whip  
you, too!"



## A NONSENSE RHYME

RINGLETY-JING!

And what will we sing?  
Some little crinkety-crankety thing  
That rhymes and chimes,  
And skips, sometimes,  
As though wound up with a kink in the spring.

Grunkety-krung!  
And chunkety-plung!  
Sing the song that the bullfrog sung,—  
A song of the soul  
Of a mad tadpole  
That met his fate in a leaky bowl:  
And it's O for the first false wiggle he made  
In a sea of pale pink lemonade!  
And it's O for the thirst  
Within him pent,  
And the hopes that burst  
As his reason went—  
When his strong arm failed and his strength was  
spent!

A NONSENSE RHYME

Sing, O sing  
Of the things that cling,  
And the claws that clutch and the fangs that sting—  
Till the tadpole's tongue  
And his tail upflung  
Quavered and failed with a song unsung!  
O the dank despair in the rank morass,  
Where the crawfish crouch in the cringing  
grass,  
And the long limp rune of the loon wails on  
For the mad, sad soul  
Of a bad tadpole  
Forever lost and gone!

Jinglety-jee!  
And now we'll see  
What the last of the lay shall be,  
As the dismal tip of the tune, O friends,  
Swoons away and the long tale ends.  
And it's O and alack!  
For the tangled legs  
And the spangled back  
Of the green grig's eggs,

A NONSENSE RHYME

And the unstrung strain  
Of the strange refrain  
That the winds wind up like a strand of rain!

And it's O,

Also,

For the ears wreathed low,  
Like a laurel-wreath on the lifted brow  
Of the frog that chants of the why and how,  
And the wherefore too, and the thus and so  
Of the wail he weaves in a woof of woe!  
Twangle, then, with your wrangling strings,  
The tinkling links of a thousand things!  
And clang the pang of a maddening moan  
Till the Echo, hid in a land unknown,  
Shall leap as he hears, and hoot and hoo  
Like the wretched wraith of a Whopty-Doo!

## NAUGHTY CLAUDE

WHEN Little Claude was naughty wunst  
At dinner-time, an' said  
He won't say "*Thank you*" to his Ma,  
She maked him go to bed  
An' stay two hours an' not git up,—  
So when the clock struck Two,  
Nen Claude says,—“Thank you, Mr. Clock,  
I'm much obleeged to you!”

## THE OLD, OLD WISH

LAST night, in some lost mood of meditation,  
The while my dreamy vision ranged the far  
Unfathomable arches of creation,  
I saw a falling star:

And as my eyes swept round the path it embered  
With the swift-dying glory of its glow,  
With sudden intuition I remembered,  
A wish of long ago—

A wish that, were it made—so ran the fancy  
Of credulous young lover and of lass—  
As fell a star, by some strange necromancy,  
Would surely come to pass.

And, of itself, the wish, reiterated  
A thousand times in youth, flashed o'er my  
brain,  
And, like the star, as soon obliterated,  
Dropped into night again.

THE OLD, OLD WISH

For my old heart had wished for the unending  
Devotion of a little maid of nine—  
And that the girl-heart, with the woman's blending,  
Might be forever mine.

And so it was, with eyelids raised, and weighty  
With ripest clusterings of sorrow's dew,  
I cried aloud through heaven: "O little Katie!  
When will my wish come true?"

“THE PREACHER’S BOY”

I RICKOLLECT the little tad, back, years and years  
ago—

“The Preacher’s Boy” that every one despised  
and hated so!

A meek-faced little feller, with white eyes and  
foxy hair,

And a look like he expected ser’ous trouble every-  
where:

A sort o’ fixed expression of suspicion in his glance;  
His bare-feet always scratched with briers; and  
green stains on his pants;

Molasses-marks along his sleeves; his cap-rim  
turned behind—

And so it is “The Preacher’s Boy” is brought  
again to mind!

My fancy even brings the sly marauder back so  
plain,

I see him jump our garden-fence and slip off down  
the lane;

“THE PREACHER’S BOY”

And I seem to holler at him and git back the old  
reply:

“Oh, no: your peaches is too green fer such a  
worm as I!”

Fer he scorned his father’s phrases—every holy  
one he had—

“As good a man,” folks put it, “as that boy of  
his was bad!”

And again from their old buggy-shed, I hear the  
“rod unspared”—

Of course that never “spoiled the child” for which  
nobody cared!

If any neighbor ever found his gate without a latch,  
Or rines around the edges of his watermelon-patch;  
His pasture-bars left open; or his pump-spout  
chocked with clay,

He’d swear ’twas “that infernal Preacher’s Boy,”  
right away!

When strings was stretched acrost the street at  
night, and some one got

An everlastin’ tumble, and his nose broke, like as  
not,



“ THE PREACHER’S BOY ”

And laid it on “The Preacher’s Boy”—no powers,  
low ner high,  
Could ever quite substantiate that boy’s alibi!

And did *nobody* like the boy?—Well, all the *pets*  
in town

Would eat out of his fingers; and canaries would  
come down

And leave their swingin’ perches and their fish-  
bone jist to pick

The little warty knuckles that the dogs would leap  
to lick.—

No little snarlin’, snappin’ fiste but what would  
leave his bone

To foller, ef *he* whistled, in that tantalizin’ tone

That made the goods-box whittler blasphemously  
protest

“He couldn’t tell, ’twixt dog and boy, which one  
was ornriest!”

’Twas such a little cur as this, onc’t, when the  
crowd was thick

Along the streets, a drunken corner-loafer tried to  
kick,

“ THE PREACHER’S BOY ”

When a sudden foot behind him tripped him up,  
and falling so  
He “ marked his man,” and jerked his gun—  
drew up and let ’er go!  
And the crowd swarmed round the victim—hold-  
ing close against his breast  
The little dog unharmed, in arms that still, as they  
caressed,  
Grew rigid in their last embrace, as with a smile  
of joy  
He recognized the dog was saved. So died “The  
Preacher’s Boy”!  
When it appeared, before the Squire, that fatal  
pistol-ball  
Was fired at “a dangerous beast,” and not the boy  
at all,  
And the facts set forth established—it was like-be-  
fittin’ then  
To order out a posse of the “city councilmen”  
To kill *the dog!* But, strange to tell, they searched  
the country round,  
And never hide-ner-hair of that “said” dog was  
ever found!

“ THE PREACHER’S BOY ”

And, somehow, *then* I sorto’ thought—and half-way think, *to-day*—

The spirit of “The Preacher’s Boy” had whistled him away.

## AN IMPETUOUS RESOLVE

WHEN little Dickie Swope's a man,  
He's go' to be a Sailor;  
An' little Hamey Tincher, he's  
A-go' to be a Tailor:  
Bud Mitchell, he's a-go' to be  
A stylish Carriage-Maker;  
An' when *I* grow a grea'-big man,  
I'm go' to be a Baker!

An' Dick'll buy his sailor-suit  
O' Hame; an' Hame'll take it  
An' buy as fine a double-rig  
As ever Bud kin make it:  
An' nen all three'll drive roun' fer me,  
An' we'll drive off togevver,  
A-slingin' pie-crust 'long the road  
Ferever an' ferever!

## A SUDDEN SHOWER

BAREFOOTED boys scud up the street  
Or scurry under sheltering sheds ;  
And school-girl faces, pale and sweet,  
Gleam from the shawls about their heads.

Doors bang ; and mother-voices call  
From alien homes ; and rusty gates  
Are slammed ; and high above it all,  
The thunder grim reverberates.

And then, abrupt,—the rain ! the rain !—  
The earth lies gasping ; and the eyes  
Behind the streaming window-pane  
Smile at the trouble of the skies.

The highway smokes ; sharp echoes ring ;  
The cattle bawl and cow-bells clank ;  
And into town comes galloping  
The farmer's horse, with steaming flank.

A SUDDEN SHOWER

The swallow dips beneath the eaves  
And flirts his plumes and folds his wings;  
And under the Catawba leaves  
The caterpillar curls and clings.

The bumblebee is pelted down  
The wet stem of the hollyhock;  
And sullenly, in spattered brown,  
The cricket leaps the garden-walk.

Within, the baby claps his hands  
And crows with rapture strange and vague;  
Without, beneath the rose-bush stands  
A dripping rooster on one leg.

## THE HUNTER BOY

HUNTER BOY of Hazelwood—  
Happier than Robin Hood!  
Dance across the green, and stand  
Suddenly, with lifted hand  
Shading eager eyes, and be  
Thus content to capture me!—  
Cease thy quest for wilder prey  
Than my willing heart to-day!

Hunter Boy! with belt and bow,  
Bide with me, or let me go,  
An thou wilt, in wake of thee,  
Questing for my mine infancy!  
With thy glad face in the sun,  
Let thy laughter overrun  
Thy ripe lips, until mine own  
Answer, ringing, tone for tone!

THE HUNTER BOY

O my Hunter! tilt the cup  
Of thy silver bugle up,  
And like wine pour out for me  
All its limpid melody!  
Pout thy happy lips and blare  
Music's kisses everywhere—  
Whiff o'er forest, field and town,  
Tufts of tune like thistle-down!  
O to go, as once I could,  
Hunter Boy of Hazelwood!



## THE MAN IN THE MOON

SAID The Raggedy Man, on a hot afternoon :

My!

Sakes!

What a lot o' mistakes

Some little folks makes on The Man in the Moon!

But people that's be'n up to *see* him, like *me*,

And calls on him frequent and intimuttly,

Might drop a few facts that would interest you

Clean!

Through!—

If you wanted 'em to—

Some *actual* facts that might interest you!

O The Man in the Moon has a crick in his back;

Whee!

Whimm!

Ain't you sorry for him?

And a mole on his nose that is purple and black;

And his eyes are so weak that they water and run

If he dares to *dream* even he looks at the sun,—

THE MAN IN THE MOON

So he jes dreams of stars, as the doctors advise—

My!

Eyes!

But isn't he wise—

To jes dream of stars, as the doctors advise?

And The Man in the Moon has a boil on his ear—

Whee!

Whing!

What a singular thing!

I know! but these facts are authentic, my dear,—

There's a boil on his ear; and a corn on his chin—

He calls it a dimple—but dimples stick in—

Yet it might be a dimple turned over, you know!

Whang!

Ho!

Why, certainly so!—

It might be a dimple turned over, you know!

And The Man in the Moon has a rheumatic knee—

Gee!

Whizz!

What a pity that is!

And his toes have worked round where his heels

ought to be.—

THE MAN IN THE MOON

So whenever he wants to go North he goes *South*,  
And comes back with porridge-crumbs all round  
his mouth,

And he brushes them off with a Japanese fan,  
Whing!

Whann!

What a marvellous man!

What a very remarkably marvellous man!

And The Man in the Moon, sighed The Raggedy  
Man,

Gits!

So!

Sullonesome, you know,—

Up there by hisse'f sence creation began!—

That when I call on him and then come away,

He grabs me and holds me and begs me to stay,—

Till—*Well!* if it wasn't fer *Jimmy-cum-jim*,

Dadd!

Limb!

I'd go pardners with him—

Jes jump my job here and be pardners with

*him!*

## A CHILD'S HOME—LONG AGO

EVEN as the gas-flames flicker to and fro,  
The Old Man's wavering fancies leap and glow,—  
As o'er the vision, like a mirage, falls  
The old log cabin with its dingy walls,  
And crippled chimney with its crutch-like prop  
Beneath a sagging shoulder at the top:  
The coonskin battened fast on either side—  
The wisps of leaf-tobacco—"cut-and-dried";  
The yellow strands of quartered apples, hung  
In rich festoons that tangle in among  
The morning-glory vines that clamber o'er  
The little clapboard roof above the door:  
The old well-sweep that drops a courtesy  
To every thirsting soul so graciously,  
The stranger, as he drains the dripping gourd,  
Intuitively mumurs, "Thank the Lord!"  
Again through mists of memory arise  
The simple scenes of home before the eyes:—

A CHILD'S HOME—LONG AGO

The happy mother, humming, with her wheel,  
The dear old melodies that used to steal  
So drowsily upon the summer air,  
The house-dog hid his bone, forgot his care,  
And nestled at her feet, to dream, perchance,  
Some cooling dream of winter-time romance:  
The square of sunshine through the open door  
That notched its edge across the puncheon floor,  
And made a golden coverlet whereon  
The god of slumber had a picture drawn  
Of Babyhood, in all the loveliness  
Of dimpled cheek and limb and linsey dress:  
The bough-filled fireplace, and the mantel wide,  
Its fire-scorched ankles stretched on either side,  
Where, perched upon its shoulders 'neath the joist,  
The old clock hiccoughed, harsh and husky-voiced,  
And snarled the premonition, dire and dread,  
When it should hammer Time upon the head:  
Tomatoes, red and yellow, in a row,  
Preserved not then for diet, but for show,—  
Like rare and precious jewels in the rough  
Whose worth was not appraised at half enough:  
The jars of jelly, with their dusty tops;  
The bunch of pennyroyal; the cordial drops;

A CHILD'S HOME—LONG AGO

The flask of camphor, and the vial of squills,  
The box of buttons, garden-seeds, and pills;  
And, ending all the mantel's bric-à-brac,  
The old, time-honored "Family Almanack."  
And memory, with a mother's touch of love,  
Climbs with us to the dusky loft above,  
Where drowsily we trail our fingers in  
The mealy treasures of the harvest bin;  
And, feeling with our hands the open track,  
We pat the bag of barley on the back;  
And, groping onward through the mellow gloom,  
We catch the hidden apple's faint perfume,  
And, mingling with it, fragrant hints of pear  
And musky melon ripening somewhere.  
Again we stretch our limbs upon the bed  
Where first our simple childish prayers were said;  
And while, without, the gallant cricket trills  
A challenge to the solemn whippoorwills,  
And, filing on the chorus with his glee,  
The katydid whets all the harmony  
To feather-edge of incoherent song,  
We drop asleep, and peacefully along  
The current of our dreams we glide away  
To the dim harbor of another day.

## BILLY GOODIN'

*"A big piece o' pie, and a big piece o' puddin'—  
I laid it all by fer little Billy Goodin'!"*

BOY-POET.

LOOK so neat an' sweet in all yer frills an' fancy  
pleatin'!

Better shet yer kitchen, though, afore you go to  
Meetin'!—

Better hide yer mince-meat an' stewed fruit an'  
plums!

Better hide yer pound-cake an' bresh away the  
crumbs!

Better hide yer cubbord-key when Billy Goodin'  
comes,

A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

BILLY GOODIN'

Sight o' Sund'y-doin's done 'at ain't done in  
Meetin'!

Sun acrost yer garden-patch a-pourin' an' a-beatin';  
Meller apples drappin' in the weeds an' roun'  
the groun'—

Clingstones an' sugar-pears a-ist a-plunkin'  
down!—

Better kindo' comb the grass 'fore Billy comes  
aroun',

A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

*Billy Goodin'* ain't a-go' to go to any Meetin'!

*We* 'ull watch an' ketch an' give the little sneak a  
beatin'!—

Better hint *we* want'o stay 'n' snoop yer grapes  
an' plums!

Better eat 'em all yerse'f an' suck yer stingy  
thumbs!—

Won't be nothin' anyhow when Billy Goodin'  
comes!

A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!



## A PASSING HAIL

LET us rest ourselves a bit!  
Worry?—wave your hand to it—  
Kiss your finger tips, and smile  
It farewell a little while.

Weary of the weary way  
We have come from Yesterday,  
Let us fret us not, instead,  
Of the weary way ahead.

Let us pause and catch our breath  
On the hither side of death,  
While we see the tender shoots  
Of the grasses—not the roots,—

While we yet look down—not up—  
To seek out the buttercup  
And the daisy where they wave  
O'er the green home of the grave.

A PASSING HAIL

Let us launch us smoothly on  
The soft billows of the lawn,  
And drift out across the main  
Of our childish dreams again:

Voyage off, beneath the trees,  
O'er the field's enchanted seas,  
Where the lilies are our sails,  
And our sea-gulls, nightingales:

Where no wilder storm shall beat  
Than the wind that waves the wheat,  
And no tempest-burst above  
The old laughs we used to love:

Lose all troubles—gain release,  
Languor, and exceeding peace,  
Cruising idly o'er the vast,  
Calm mid-ocean of the Past.

Let us rest ourselves a bit!  
Worry?—Wave your hand to it—  
Kiss your finger-tips, and smile  
It farewell a little while.

PRIOR TO MISS BELLE'S APPEAR-  
ANCE

WHAT makes you come *here* fer, Mister,  
So much to *our* house?—*Say?*  
Come to see our big sister!—  
An' Charley he says 'at you kissed her  
An' he ketched you, th'uther day!—  
Didn' you, Charley?—But we p'omised Belle  
An' crossed our heart to never tell—  
'Cause *she* gived us some o' them-er  
Chawk'lut-drops 'at you bringed to her!

Charley he's my little b'uther—  
An' we has a-mostest fun,  
Don't we, Charley?—Our Muther,  
Whenever we whips one-anuther,  
Tries to whip *us*—an' we *run*—  
Don't we, Charley?—An' nen, bime-by,  
Nen she gives us cake—an' pic—  
Don't she, Charley?—when we come in  
An' p'omise never to do it ag'in!

*He's* named Charley.—I'm *Willie*—

An' I'm got the purtiest name!  
But Uncle Bob *he* calls me "Billy"—  
Don't he, Charley?—'N' our filly

We named "Billy," the same  
Ist like me! An' our Ma said  
'At "Bob puts foolishnuss into our head!"—  
Didn' she, Charley?—An' *she* don't know  
Much about *boys*! 'Cause Bob said so!

Baby's a funniest feller!

Nain't no hair on his head—  
*Is* they, Charley?—It's meller  
Wite up there! An' ef Belle er

Us ask wus *we* that way, Ma said,—  
"Yes; an' yer *Pa's* head wuz soft as that,  
An' it's that way yet!"—An' Pa grabs his hat  
An' says, "Yes, childern, she's right about Pa—  
'Cause that's the reason he married yer Ma!"

An' our Ma says 'at "Belle couldn'

Ketch nothin' at all but ist '*bows*!'—  
An' *Pa* says 'at "you're soft as puddun!"—  
An' *Uncle Bob* says "you're a good-un—  
'Cause he can tell by yer nose!"—

PRIOR TO MISS BELLE'S APPEARANCE

Didn' he, Charley?—An' when Belle'll play  
In the poller on th' pianer, some day,  
Bob makes up funny songs about you,  
Till she gits mad—like he wants her to!

Our sister *Fanny* she's 'leven

Years old! 'At's mucher 'an *I*—  
Ain't it, Charley? . . . I'm seven!—  
But our sister *Fanny*'s in *heaven*!

Nere's where you go ef you die!—  
Don't you, Charley?—Nen you has *wings*—  
*Ist like Fanny!*—an' *purtiest things!*—  
Don't you, Charley?—An' nen you can *fly*—  
Let fly—an' *ever*'thing! . . . Wisht *I'd* die!

## SONG—FOR NOVEMBER

WHILE skies glint bright with bluest light  
Through clouds that race o'er field and town,  
And leaves go dancing left and right,  
And orchard apples tumble down;  
While school-girls sweet, in lane or street,  
Lean 'gainst the wind and feel and hear  
Its glad heart like a lover's beat,—  
So reigns the rapture of the year.

*Then ho! and hey! and whoop-hooray!*  
*Though winter clouds be looming,*  
*Remember a November day*  
*Is merrier than mildest May*  
*With all her blossoms blooming.*

While birds in scattered flight are blown  
Aloft and lost in bosky mist,  
And truant boys scud home alone  
'Neath skies of gold and amethyst;

SONG—FOR NOVEMBER

While twilight falls, and echo calls  
Across the haunted atmosphere,  
With low, sweet laughs at intervals,—  
So reigns the rapture of the year.

*Then ho! and hey! and whoop-hooray!*

*Though winter clouds be looming,*

*Remember a November day*

*Is merrier than mildest May*

*With all her blossoms blooming.*

## HONEY DRIPPING FROM THE COMB

How slight a thing may set one's fancy drifting  
Upon the dead sea of the Past!--A view—  
Sometimes an odor—or a rooster lifting  
A far-off "*Ooh! ooh-oo!*"

And suddenly we find ourselves astray  
In some wood's-pasture of the Long Ago—  
Or idly dream again upon a day  
Of rest we used to know.

I bit an apple but a moment since—  
A wilted apple that the worm had spurned,—  
Yet hidden in the taste were happy hints  
Of good old days returned.—

And so my heart, like some enraptured lute,  
Tinkles a tune so tender and complete,  
God's blessing must be resting on the fruit—  
So bitter, yet so sweet!



## BILLY COULD RIDE

### I

BILLY was born for a horse's back!—  
That's what Grandfather used to say:—  
He'd seen him in dresses, a-many a day,  
On a two-year-old, in the old barn-lot,  
Prancing around, with the bridle slack,  
And his two little sunburnt legs outshot  
So straight from the saddle-seat you'd swear  
A spirit-level had plumbed him there!  
And all the neighbors that passed the place  
Would just haul up in the road and stare  
To see the little chap's father boost  
The boy up there on his favorite roost,  
To canter off, with a laughing face.—  
Put him up there, he was satisfied—  
And O the way that Billy could ride!

## II

At celebration or barbecue—  
And Billy, a boy of fifteen years—  
Couldn't he cut his didoes there?—  
What else would you expect him to,  
On his little mettlesome chestnut mare,  
With her slender neck, and her pointed ears,  
And the four little devilish hooves of hers?  
The "delegation" moved too slow  
For the time that Billy wanted to go!  
And to see him dashing out of the line  
At the edge of the road and down the side  
Of the long procession, all laws defied,  
And the fife and drums, was a sight divine  
To the girls, in their white-and-spangled pride,  
Wearily waving their scarfs about  
In the great "Big Wagon," all gilt without  
And jolt within, as they lumbered on  
Into the town where Billy had gone  
An hour ahead, like a knightly guide—  
O but the way that Billy could ride!

## III

“Billy can ride! Oh, Billy can ride!  
But what on earth can he do beside?”  
That’s what the farmers used to say,  
As time went by a year at a stride,  
And Billy was twenty if he was a day!  
And many a wise old father’s foot  
Was put right down where it should be put,  
While many a dutiful daughter sighed  
In vain for one more glorious ride  
With the gallant Billy, who none the less  
Smiled at the old man’s selfishness  
And kissed his daughter, and rode away,—  
Touched his horse in the flank—and *zip!*—  
Talk about horses and horsemanship!—  
Folks stared after him just wild-eyed. . . .  
*Oomh!* the way that Billy could ride!

## SHE "DISPLAINS" IT

"HAD, too!"

"*Hadn't, neither!*"

So contended Bess and May—

Neighbor children, who were boasting  
Of their grandmamas, one day.

"Had, too!"

"*Hadn't, neither!*"

All the difference begun

By May's saying she'd *two* grandmas—  
While poor Bess had only one.

"Had, too!"

"*Hadn't, neither!*"

Tossing curls, and kinks of friz!—

"How could you have *two* gran'muvvers  
When ist *one* is all they is?"

"Had, too!"

"*Hadn't, neither!*—

'Cause ef you had *two*," said Bess,

"You'd *displain* it!" Then May answered,  
"*My* gran'mas wuz *twins*, I guess!"

## THE WAY THE BABY SLEPT

THIS is the way the baby slept:

A mist of tresses backward thrown  
By quavering sighs where kisses crept

With yearnings she had never known:  
The little hands were closely kept

About a lily newly blown—  
And God was with her. And we wept.—  
And this is the way the baby slept.

## THE JOLLY MILLER

[*Restored Romaunt*]

It was a Jolly Miller lived on the River Dee ;  
He looked upon his piller, and there he found a flea ;  
“O Mr. Flea! you have bit me,  
    And you shall shorely die!”  
So he scrunched his bones ag’inst the stones—  
    And there he let him lie!

’Twas then the Jolly Miller he laughed and told  
    his wife,  
And *she* laughed fit to kill her, and dropped her  
    carving-knife!—  
“O Mr. Flea!” “Ho-ho!” “Tee-hee!”  
    They *both* laughed fit to kill,  
Until the sound did almost drownd  
    The rumble of the mill!

THE JOLLY MILLER

“*Laugh on, my Jolly Miller! and Missus Miller,  
too!*—

*But there’s a weeping-willer will soon wave over  
you!”*

The voice was all so awful small—

So very small and slim!—

He durst’ infer that it was her,

Ner her infer ’twas him!

That night the Jolly Miller, says he, “It’s, Wifey  
dear,

That cat o’ yourn, I’d kill her!—her actions is so  
queer,—

She’s rubbin’ ’g’inst the grindstone-legs,

And yowlin’ at the sky—

And I ’low the moon hain’t greener

Than the yaller of her eye!”

And as the Jolly Miller went chuckle-un to bed,

Was *Somepin’* jerked his piller from underneath  
his head!

“O Wife,” says he, on-easi-lee,

“Fetch here that lantern there!”

But *Somepin’* moans in thunder-tones,

“*You tetch it ef you dare!*”

THE JOLLY MILLER

'Twas then the Jolly Miller he trimbled and he  
    quailed—

And his wife choked until her breath come back,  
    'n' she *wailed!*

And "O!" cried she, "it is *the Flea,*

    All white and pale and wann—

He's got you in his clutches, and

*He's bigger than a man!*"

"Ho! ho! my Jolly Miller" (*fer 'twas the Flea,*  
    *fer shore!*),

"I reckon you'll not rack my bones ner scrunch  
    'em any more!"

Then *the Flea-Ghost* he grabbed him clos't,

    With many a ghastly smile,

And from the door-step stooped and hopped

    About four hundred mile!



## WITH THE CURRENT

RAREST mood of all the year!

Aimless, idle, and content—  
Sky and wave and atmosphere  
Wholly indolent.

Little daughter, loose the band  
From your tresses—let them pour  
Shadow-like o'er arm and hand  
Idling at the oar.

Low and clear, and pure and deep,  
Ripples of the river sing—  
Water-lilies, half asleep,  
Drowsed with listening:

Tremulous reflex of skies—  
Skies above and skies below,—  
Paradise and Paradise  
Blending even so!

WITH THE CURRENT

Blossoms with their leaves unrolled  
Laughingly, as they were lips  
Cleft with ruddy beaten gold  
Tongues of pollen-tips.

Rush and reed, and thorn and vine,  
Clumped with grasses lithe and tall—  
With a web of summer-shine  
Woven round it all.

Back and forth, and to and fro—  
Flashing scale and wing as one,—  
Dragon-flies that come and go,  
Shuttled by the sun.

Fairy lilts and lullabies,  
Fine as fantasy conceives,—  
Echoes wrought of cricket-cries  
Sifted through the leaves.

O'er the rose, with drowsy buzz,  
Hangs the bee, and stays his kiss,  
Even as my fancy does,  
Gypsy, over this.

WITH THE CURRENT

Let us both be children—share  
Youth's glad voyage night and day,  
Drift adown it, half aware,  
Anywhere we may.—

Drift and curve and deviate,  
Veer and eddy, float and flow,  
Waver, swerve and undulate,  
As the bubbles go.

## A SLEEPING BEAUTY

### I

AN alien wind that blew and blew  
Over the fields where the ripe grain grew,  
  
Sending ripples of shine and shade  
That crept and crouched at her feet and played.

The sea-like summer washed the moss  
Till the sun-drenched lilies hung like floss,

Draping the throne of green and gold  
That lulled her there like a queen of old.

### II

Was it the hum of a bumblebee,  
Or the long-hushed bugle eerily

Winding a call to the daring Prince  
Lost in the wood long ages since?—

A SLEEPING BEAUTY

A dim old wood, with a palace rare  
Hidden away in its depths somewhere!

Was it the Princess, tranced in sleep,  
Awaiting her lover's touch to leap

Into the arms that bent above?—  
To thaw his heart with the breath of love—

And cloy his lips, through her waking tears,  
With the dead-ripe kiss of a hundred years!

III

An alien wind that blew and blew.—  
I had blurred my eyes as the artists do,

Coaxing life to a half-sketched face,  
Or dreaming bloom for a grassy place.

The bee droned on in an undertone;  
And a shadow-bird trailed all alone

Across the wheat, while a liquid cry  
Dripped from above, as it went by.

A SLEEPING BEAUTY

What to her was the far-off whir  
Of the quail's quick wing or the chipmunk's chirr?—

What to her was the shade that slid  
Over the hill where the reapers hid?—

Or what the hunter, with one foot raised,  
As he turned to go—yet, pausing, gazed?

## AT AUNTY'S HOUSE

ONE time, when we'z at Aunty's house—

'Way in the country!—where

They's ist but woods—an' pigs, an' cows—

An' all's outdoors an' air!—

An' orchurd-swing; an' churry-trees—

An' *churries* in 'em!—Yes, an' these-

Here redhead birds steals all they please,

An' tetch 'em ef you dare!—

W'y, wunst, one time, when we wuz there,

*We et out on the porch!*

Wite where the cellar door wuz shut

The table wuz; an' I

Let Aunty set by me an' cut

My vittuls up—an' pie.

'Tuz awful funny!—I could see

The redheads in the churry-tree;

An' beehives, where you got to be

So keerful, goin' by;—

An' "Comp'ny" there an' all!—an' we—

*We et out on the porch!*

AT AUNTY'S HOUSE

An' I ist et *p'surves* an' things  
    'At Ma don't 'low me to—  
An' *chickun-gizzurds*—(don't like *wings*  
    Like *Parunts* does! do *you?*)  
An' all the time the wind blowed there,  
An' I could feel it in my hair,  
An' ist smell clover *ever'*where!—  
    An' a' old redhead flew  
Purt' nigh wite over my high-chair,  
    *When we et on the porch!*



## THE WHITHERAWAYS

[*Set Sail, October 15, 1890*]

THE Whitheraways!—That's what I'll have to call  
You—sailing off, with never a word at all  
Of parting!—sailing 'way across the sea,  
With never one good-bye to *me*—to ME!

Sailing away from me, with no farewell!—  
Ah, Parker Hitt and sister Muriel—  
And Rodney, too, and little Laurance—all  
Sailing away—just as the leaves, this Fall!

Well, then, *I* too shall sail on cheerily  
As now you all go sailing o'er the sea:  
I've *other* little friends with me on shore—  
Though they but make me yearn for *you* the more!

And so, sometime, dear little friends afar,  
When this faint voice shall reach you, and you are  
All just a little homesick, you must be  
As brave as I am now, and think of me!

THE WHITHERAWAYS

Or, haply, if your eyes, as mine, droop low,  
And would be humored with a tear or so,—  
Go to your *Parents*, Children!—let *them* do  
The *crying*—'twill be easier for them to!

## THE RAGGEDY MAN

O THE Raggedy Man! He works fer Pa;  
An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!  
He comes to our house every day,  
An' waters the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;  
An' he opens the shed—an' we all ist laugh  
When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;  
An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—  
He milks the cow fer 'Lizabuth Ann.—  
Aint he a' awful good Raggedy Man?  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, The Raggedy Man—he's ist so good  
He splits the kindlin' an' chops the wood;  
An' nen he spades in our garden, too,  
An' does most things 'at boys can't do.—  
He clumbed clean up in our big tree  
An' shooked a' apple down fer me—  
An' nother'n, too, fer 'Lizabuth Ann—  
An' nother'n', too, fer The Raggedy Man.—  
Aint he a' awful kind Raggedy Man?  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

THE RAGGEDY MAN

An' The Raggedy Man, he knows most rhymes  
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes:  
Knows 'bout Giunts, an' Griffuns, an' Elves,  
An' the Squidgicum-Squees 'at swallers ther-  
selves!

An', wite by the pump in our pasture-lot,  
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got,  
'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can  
Turn into me, er' Lizabuth Ann!

Aint he a funny old Raggedy Man?

Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time when he  
Was makin' a little bow-'n'-orry fer me,  
Says "When *you're* big like your Pa is,  
Air you go' to keep a fine store like his—  
An' be a rich merchunt—an' wear fine clothes?—  
Er what *air* you go' to be, goodness knows!"  
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,  
An' I says "'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—

I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"

Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

## A BOY'S MOTHER

My Mother she's so good to me,  
Ef I was good as I could be,  
I couldn't be as good—no, sir!—  
Can't any boy be good as her!

She loves me when I'm glad er sad;  
She loves me when I'm good er bad;  
An', what's a funniest thing, she says  
She loves me when she punishes.

I don't like her to punish me.—  
That don't hurt,—but it hurts to see  
Her cryin'.—Nen *I* cry; an' nen  
We both cry an' be good again.

She loves me when she cuts an' sews  
My little cloak an' Sund'y clothes;  
An' when my Pa comes home to tea,  
She loves him most as much as me.

She laughs an' tells him all I said,  
An' grabs me up an' pats my head;  
An' I hug *her*, an' hug my Pa  
An' love him purt' nigh as much as Ma.

## IN SWIMMING-TIME

CLOUDS above, as white as wool,  
    Drifting over skies as blue  
As the eyes of beautiful  
    Children when they smile at you :  
Groves of maple, elm, and beech,  
    With the sunshine sifted through  
Branches, mingling each with each,  
    Dim with shade and bright with dew.

Stripling trees, and poplars hoar,  
Hickory and sycamore,  
And the drowsy dogwood, bowed  
Where the ripples laugh aloud,  
And the crooning creek is stirred  
    To a gaiety that now  
Mates the warble of the bird.  
    Teetering on the hazel-bough.

IN SWIMMING-TIME

Grasses long and fine and fair  
As your schoolboy-sweetheart's hair  
Backward stroked and twirled and twined  
By the fingers of the wind:

Vines and mosses interlinked

Down dark aisles and deep ravines,  
Where the stream runs, willow-brinked,  
Round a bend where some one leans,

Faint, and vague, and indistinct

As the like-reflected thing

In the current shimmering.

Childish voices, further on,  
Where the truant stream has gone,  
Vex the echoes of the wood

Till no word is understood—

Save that we are well aware

Happiness is hiding there:—

There, in leafy coverts, nude

Little bodies poise and leap,

Splattering the solitude

And the silence, everywhere—

Mimic monsters of the deep!—

IN SWIMMING-TIME

Wallowing in sandy shoals—  
    Plunging headlong out of sight,  
    And, with spurtings of delight,  
Clutching hands, and slippery soles,  
    Climbing up the treacherous steep,  
Over which the spring-board spurns  
Each again as he returns!  
Ah! the glorious carnival!  
    Purple lips—and chattering teeth—  
    Eyes that burn—But, in beneath,  
Every care beyond recall—  
    Every task forgotten quite—  
    And again in dreams at night,  
Dropping, drifting through it all!



## THE FISHING PARTY

WUNST we went a-fishin'—Me  
An' my Pa an' Ma all three,  
When they was a pic-nic, 'way  
Out to Hanch's Woods, one day.

An' they was a crick out there,  
Where the fishes is, an' where  
Little boys 'taint big an' strong,  
Better have their folks along!

My Pa he ist fished an' fished!  
An' my Ma she said she wished  
Me an' her was home; an' Pa  
Said he wished so worse'n Ma.

Pa said ef you talk, er say  
Anything, er sneeze, er play,  
Hain't no fish, alive er dead,  
Ever go' to bite! he said.

THE FISHING PARTY

Purt' nigh dark in town when we  
Got back home; an' Ma says she,  
*Now* she'll have a fish fer shore!  
An' she buyed one at the store.

Nen at supper, Pa he won't  
Eat no fish, an' says he don't  
Like 'em.—An' he pounded me  
When I choked! . . . Ma, didn't he?

## THE BOY LIVES ON OUR FARM

THE Boy lives on our Farm, he's not

Afeard o' horses none!

An' he can make 'em lope, er trot,

Er rack, er pace, er run.

Sometimes he drives two horses, when

He comes to town an' brings

A wagon-full o' 'taters nen,

An' roastin'-ears an' things.

Two horses is "a team," he says,—

An' when you drive er hitch,

The right-un's a "near-horse," I guess,

Er "off"—I don't know which.—

The Boy lives on our Farm, he told

Me, too, 'at he can see,

By lookin' at their teeth, how old

A horse is, to a T!

THE BOY LIVES ON OUR FARM

I'd be the gladdest boy alive  
Ef I knowed much as that,  
An' could stand up like him an' drive,  
An' ist push back my hat,  
Like he comes skallyhootin' through  
Our alley, with one arm  
A-wavin' Fare-ye-well! to you—  
The Boy lives on our Farm!

## THE RUNAWAY BOY

WUNST I sassed my Pa, an' he  
Won't stand that, an' punished me,—  
Nen when he was gone that day,  
I slipped out an' runned away.

I tooked all my copper-cents,  
An' clumbed over our back fence  
In the jimpson-weeds 'at growed  
Ever'where all down the road.

Nen I got out there, an' nen  
I runned some—an' runned again  
When I met a man 'at led  
A big cow 'at shooked her head.

I went down a long, long lane  
Where was little pigs a-play'n';  
An' a grea'-big pig went "Booh!"  
An' jumped up, an' skeered me too.

Nen I scampered past, an' they  
Was somebody hollered "Hey!"  
An' I ist looked ever'where,  
An' they was nobody there.

THE RUNAWAY BOY

I *want* to, but I'm 'fraid to try  
To go back. . . .An' by-an'-by,  
Somepin' hurts my throat inside—  
An' I want my Ma—an' cried.

Nen' a grea'-big girl come through  
Where's a gate, an' telled me who  
Am I? an' ef I tell where  
My home's at she'll show me there.

But I couldn't ist but tell  
What's my *name*; an' she says well,  
An' she tooked me up an' says  
She know where I live, she guess.

Nen she telled me hug wite close  
Round her neck!—an' off she goes  
Skippin' up the street! An' nen  
Purty soon I'm home again.

An' my Ma, when she kissed me,  
Kissed the *big girl* too, an' *she*  
Kissed me—ef I p'omise *shore*  
I won't run away no more!

## OUR HIRED GIRL

OUR hired girl, she's 'Lizabuth Ann;  
An' she can cook best things to eat!  
She ist puts dough in our pie-pan,  
An' pours in somepin' 'at's good and sweet,  
An' nen she salts it all on top  
With cinnamon; an' nen she'll stop  
An' stoop an' slide it, ist as slow,  
In th' old cook-stove, so's 'twont slop  
An' git all spilled; nen bakes it, so  
It's custard pie, first thing you know!  
An' nen she'll say:  
"Clear out o' my way!  
They's time fer work, an' time fer play!—  
Take yer dough, an' run, Child; run!  
Er I cain't git no cookin' done!"

When our hired girl 'tends like she's mad,  
An' says folks got to walk the chalk  
When *she's* around, er wisht they had,  
I play out on our porch an' talk

OUR HIRED GIRL

To th' Raggedy Man 'at mows our lawn;  
An' he says "*Whew!*" an' nen leans on  
His old crook-scythe, and blinks his eyes  
An' sniffs all round an' says,—“I swawn!  
Ef my old nose don't tell me lies,  
It 'pears like I smell custard-pies!”

An' nen *he'll* say,—

“Clear out o' my way!

They's time fer work an' time fer play!

Take yer dough, an' run, Child; run!

Er *she* cain't git no cookin' done!”

Wunst our hired girl, when she

Got the supper, an' we all et,

An' it was night, an' Ma an' me

An' Pa went wher' the “Social” met,—

An' nen when we come home, an' see

A light in the kitchen-door, an' we

Heerd a maccordeun, Pa says “Lan'-

O'-Gracious! who can *her* beau be?”

An' I marched in, an' 'Lizabuth Ann

Wuz parchin' corn fer the Raggedy Man!

*Better* say

“Clear out o' the way!



OUR HIRED GIRL

They's time fer work, an' time fer play!  
Take the hint, an' run, Child; run!  
Er we cain't git no *courtin'* done!"

## ENVOY

MANY pleasures of Youth have been buoyantly  
sung—

And, borne on the winds of delight, may they  
beat

With their palpitant wings at the hearts of the  
Young,

And in bosoms of Age find as warm a retreat!—

Yet sweetest of all of the musical throng,

Though least of the numbers that upward aspire,  
Is the one rising now into wavering song,

As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.

'Tis a Winter long dead that beleaguers my door

And muffles his steps in the snows of the past:

And I see, in the embers I'm dreaming before,

Lost faces of love as they looked on me last:—

The round, laughing eyes of the desk-mate of old

Gleam out for a moment with truant desire—

Then fade and are lost in a City of Gold,

As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.

ENVOY

And then comes the face, peering back in my own,  
Of a shy little girl, with her lids drooping low,  
As she faltering tells, in a far-away tone,  
The ghost of a story of long, long ago.—  
Then her dewy blue eyes they are lifted again;  
But I see their glad light slowly fail and expire,  
As I reach and cry to her in vain, all in vain!—  
As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.

Then the face of a Mother looks back, through the  
mist  
Of the tears that are welling; and, lucent with  
light,  
I see the dear smile of the lips I have kissed  
As she knelt by my cradle at morning and night;  
And my arms are outheld, with a yearning too wild  
For any but God in His love to inspire,  
As she pleads at the foot of His throne for her  
child,—  
As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.

O pathos of rapture! O glorious pain!  
My heart is a blossom of joy overrun

ENVOY

With a shower of tears, as a lily with rain  
That weeps in the shadow and laughs in the  
sun.

The blight of the frost may descend on the tree,  
And the leaf and the flower may fall and expire,  
But ever and ever love blossoms for me,  
As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.





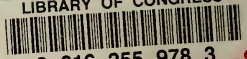








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